

Educational Ideas and Ideals of Eminent Indians

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Dedicated
to
MY PARENTS

By the same Author

Educational Ideas and Ideals
of Gandhi and Tagore

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P R E F A C E

The present volume follows in quick succession a similar book entitled : EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF GANDHI AND TAGORE. Subsequent to the publication of the second edition of the afore-mentioned work, the publishers suggested to the author that he might take up a similar work dealing with the educational ideas and ideals of some of the eminent Indians.

The publishers themselves selected the personalities for study and chose the title for this work. The author feels very happy about it, because the publishers could not have chosen better or designated it better. The personalities included for study in this volume are undoubtedly eminent. Each one has distinguished himself in various fields of activities. Despite the specific function, almost all the personalities have, besides, distinguished themselves equally well in the field of education, some in a general fashion, while others, in a distinct manner. On the whole, each one of the personalities concerned, has had something concrete to contribute, particularly in regard to education.

In this volume, the study has been divided into two parts one part deals with the EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF INDIA which are many-sided, and rather complex in their nature and magnitude. Since Independence, our educational system has taken a different hue, as in the case of several other spheres. It is no doubt true that our educational system is no longer 'over shadowed by a foreign hand and foreign in aim, method, substance and spirit (Aurobindo) as it used to be in pre-Independence days. But, 'has education, now ceased to be denationalising degrading and impoverishing to the national mind, soul and character', is a pertinent question which cannot be easily answered. Nevertheless, in the pages that follow, the author has addressed himself to the task—stupendous no doubt, of laying bare the problems of Education in post-Independent India, with a many-sided focus. The problems taken

up for study, can by no means be considered to be exhaustive, but they are nonetheless significant. The study covers a cross-section of the field, though limited in its scope : the problems touch several strategic aspects *viz.*, A New Vision for Education, Education for Rural India, Education for Social Change, Education for Training in Leadership, Making the Millions Literate, Education Remaking Indian Society, Education for Community Development and Higher Education in India. In a way, the study is three dimensional in its approach—a study in retrospect, a study of the present situation, and a projection into the future—looking ahead, sometimes, though not always.

Another part of the work is concerned with a study of the EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF EMINENT INDIANS. What the author has attempted to undertake in this part of the study is, to collect, analyse and interpret the ideas and ideals of the eminent personalities concerned, and present them in as clear and concise a manner as possible. Sufficient care has been taken to see that no important aspect of education is left out. The essential ideas and ideals scattered pell mell, but having a relevant bearing on modern educational problems, have been culled out of the voluminous speeches and writings of the eminent personalities. To a certain extent, the area covered would represent a typical cross-section of the important field of education in India, in its varied and manifold aspects *viz.*, Children's Education, Adult Education, Women's Education, Concept of Education, Aim of Education, Mass Communication Media, etc., to mention only a few, though not all.

Now a word about the eminent Indians. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, our Rashtrapathi, is one of the most distinguished educationists of our country. Since the days of Swami Vivekananda, no Indian has done such signal service to his Motherland as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, in presenting in his own inimitable language to the Western world all that is truest, noblest and best in Hindu religion and thought. As Principal Jacks once remarked : "Sir Radhakrishnan is not only a great living master of Eastern

thought but of the Western as well." All his principal discourses reveal the Eastern mind to the Western. Before he took over as President of the Republic of India, he has held with unique distinction several enviable posts : Dr. Radhakrishnan has been a don, a philosopher, a diplomat and a statesman with equal success. In all his speeches and writings, the many facets of his rich and powerful mind are reflected in their splendour. 'He speaks with meditative introspection about the world of the spirit ; and with passionate intensity about the world of to-day and to-morrow. His words bear the impress of his personality.' As Chairman of the 'University Education Commission', he has rendered yeoman's service to the cause of Higher Education in the country.

The late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was, in the words of our President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'one of the greatest figures of our generation, an outstanding statesman whose services to the cause of human freedom are unforgettable. As a fighter for freedom he was illustrious, as a maker of modern India his services were unparalleled. His life and work have had a profound influence on our mental make-up, social structure and intellectual development.' As further observed by Rashtrapathi Radhakrishnan: "Nehru by his series of public utterances educated our people to an appreciation of the values he had cherished. He fought for a high level of human life and burnt his ideals into the understanding of the common people. By his own powerful and vibrant voice, which we will not hear any more, he created, moulded, inspired and kindled a whole generation of Indians, to a loyalty to the five principles which he held so dear. . . His courage, wisdom and personality have held this country together. It is these qualities which should be cherished, if we are to hold on. Our thoughts to-day go out to him as a great emancipator of the human race one who has given all his life to the freeing of men's minds from political bondage, economic slavery, social oppression and cultural stagnation."

Dr. Zakir Hussain, the Vice-President of the Republic of India, is, as is very well-known, an eminent education-

ing. He has rendered so much to the cause of Education in the country and is the father of many new schemes which are probably current to-day in our educational institutions. As President of the Committee of Educationists appointed at the first Conference of National Education, held at Wardha in 1937, Dr. Zakir Hussain gave concrete shape to Mahatma Gandhi's scheme of basic education. The scheme of basic education, according to Mahatma Gandhi, was 'a revolution in the education of village children'. It was in no sense an importation from the West. Later, Dr. Zakir Hussain, has been Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Mil'ia (Delhi) and of Aligarh University. He has been a member of the Rajya Sabha and served on the Press Commission and the University Grants Commission. He has been Governor of Bihar since 1957 and after completion of his term of office, he took over as Vice-President of the Republic of our country.

Shri Aurobindo is a philosopher, saint, mystic and seer of great renown. He had his early education in England—he was subjected to the purely occidental influence in his impressionable years through his early education at the English Public School and University Education in England. He won his classical tripos at Cambridge, and soon afterwards sat for the Indian Civil Service examination held in England and came out successful, though he did not compete for riding (horse) test. On return to India, he saw service under the then Maharaja of Baroda for some years, and was later a Professor of French and English at Baroda. For some time he worked in Bengal in a national educational institution, but left it to plunge himself into politics. He was in the vortex of the nationalist struggle for the country's liberation for some years, and proved himself to be a distinguished patriot for the cause of national Independence, especially through his brilliant speeches and active participation in politics at the beginning of the century. Destiny so willed it that Shri Aurobindo was not to remain longer in politics. What the country lost in him as a politician and a patriot, was regained and more than compensated for, in Shri Aurobindo, the philosopher, the

saint, the mystic and the seer. After settling down at Pondicherry, he took no active part in politics, but his interests were alive. He took to silence and rigorous yoga-synthetic and integral. Ever since then, he has been expressing his views on several issues through his own publications, which he himself edited for a long time, i.e., *Arya* and others. His views on education, studied in the proper perspective, reveal that Shri Aurobindo is no doubt one of the most eminent and distinguished educationists of our country. It was his considered opinion that education, as was obtained in the then existing schools and universities 'has been bad in kind and in addition, denationalising, degrading and impoverishing to the national mind, soul and character'. His revolutionary mind reacted against a truncated kind of "national" education—an epithet to tag on the word 'national' to a school or college. What kind of education does he advocate? To his mind, which was a genius, a reversion to some past principle, would be a 'sterile and impossible effort, hopelessly inadequate to the pressing demands of the present and the far greater demands of our future'. On the other hand, nor does he favour taking over the 'English, German or American school and university or some variation on them with a gloss of Indian colour'. He maintains that the kind of education, we need in our country, is an education 'proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture that we are in quest of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past, but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming self-creation, to her eternal spirit.'

Swami Dayanand Saraswati started a new movement of thought in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was the Arya Samaj—one of the most notable reform movements. The Arya Samaj was, as is well-known, a reaction to the influence of Islam and Christianity—more or less a tidal wave in those days. In a sense, it was a crusading and reforming movement from within, as well as a defensive organisation for protection against external attacks. "It has done" in the words of the late Pt. Nehru "very good

work in the spread of education both among boys and girls, in improving the condition of women, and in raising the status and standards of the depressed classes."

Remarking about Swami Dayanand Saraswati's striking contribution, Dr Rabindranath Tagore once observed : " With a clear-sighted vision of truth and courage of determination, he preached and worked for our self-respect and vigorous awakening of mind that could strive for a harmonious adjustment with the progressive spirit of the modern age and at the same time keep in perfect touch with the glorious past of India when it revealed its personality in freedom of thought and action, in unclouded radiance of spiritual realisation". His contribution to education in our country has been very striking and significant indeed, though his field of activities was mostly spiritual, religious and social. He was a great social reformer, outstanding religious preacher and erudite Vedic scholar who wanted to revolutionize the then prevalent various systems of beliefs and religious customs of our country—he was against idolatry, he advocated social reform, essentially through the instrumentality of Education. In his crusading zeal, he advocated mass education—for both men and women without distinction.

' Swami Vivekananda burst upon the Indian horizon at the close of the last century as a leader and a teacher, an authoritative spokesman of India's culture and the bearer of a message to the world at large as much as to his own people.' He was one of the greatest of the modern exponents of Hinduism in all its phases. At the outset, he was himself a product of Western education. As the late Pandit Nehru observed: "He was greatly influenced by his travels in Western countries, he admired British perseverance and the vitality and spirit of equality of the American people. . . . But he was not impressed by the manifestations of religion in the West and his faith in the Indian philosophical and spiritual background became firmer." He, together with his brother disciples, founded the non-sectarian Ramakrishna Mission of Service. "Rooted in the past and full

of pride in India's prestige", says Pandit Nehru, "Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present. His life's mission was dedication to service of mankind—through social service, mass education, religious revival and social awakening through education of men and women without distinction. He spoke of many things, 'but one constant refrain of his speech and writing was *abhaya*—'be fearless, be strong'. Again and again, he laid stress on the necessity for liberty and equality and the raising of the masses. He wanted to combine as though in an alchemy, Western progress with India's spiritual background. He was for combining Western utility with Eastern art. His motto was : "Make a European Society with India's religion. Become an Occidental of Occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy and at the same time a Hindu to the very back-bone in religious culture and instincts." His contribution to Indian national development has been deep, besides being comprehensive. He was perhaps the first to dare to lay bare our problems—social, educational, cultural and religious, and to rouse the thinking section to a keener sense of the urgency of the country's problems. Thus , he was responsible for stirring the nation's conscience and focussing our pointed attention on our national defects and stimulating our energies in the appropriate direction of the 'forging of our national character.'

TANJORE, Madras State,

7th March, 1965.

R.S. MANI.

The best function of education is to enable us to realise that to live as a man is great, requiring profound philosophy for its ideal, poetry for its expression, and heroism in its conduct.

Tagore

CHAPTER I

ADULT EDUCATION AND FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION—AN INTEGRAL APPROACH

Concept of Education

To-day, education operates an extremely dominant influence. Democracy for its effective functioning presupposes a well-informed citizenry. In a country like ours where illiteracy has not yet been liquidated to an appreciable degree, democracy and decentralised administration are bound to present difficulties, the overcoming of which will largely depend on the speed with which the masses can be made literate and, if not at least be kept well-informed through effective mass media of communication. Naturally, therefore, the modern belief, though old enough, that 'most social ills can be resolved through education' is a point of view which stems from the feeling that 'universal education should be one of the salient features of democratic ideology'.

In India, education is now a responsibility of the Government. Article 45 of the Constitution does ensure, among others :

"Universal, free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six and fourteen years". It is true of course, that it has not been possible for us to achieve the goal set before us. Perhaps, our constitutional obligation has been over-ambitious for the freedom winners. Nevertheless, this constitutional provision was written into the fundamental law of the land, because of the sheer conviction of its framers that adult education is vital to the country's progress

What is Adult Education ?

Would it not be best to begin with a few definitions of Adult Education?

Numerous definitions of adult education exist, and a few of them are listed hereunder in order to make sure that more than one viewpoint is aired :

Reenes, Fensler and Houle define adult education as "∴ any purposeful effort towards self-development carried on by an individual without direct legal compulsion and without such effort becoming his major field of activity".¹ According to the same authority, adult education may be concerned with any or more of three aspects of his life: his work life, his personal life, or his life as a citizen.

According to Lyman Bryson, "Adult education embraces whatever help in living can be got from the recorded or communicated experience of others. It is education for everybody at all times and in all conditions".²

Another authority defines adult education as all activities with an educational purpose carried on by people in the ordinary business of life who use only part of their time and energy to acquire intellectual equipment.³

Some others like Morgan, Holmes and Bundy would observe :

Adult education may be thought of as the conscious effort of a mature person to learn something new. It should be made clear that the concept of adult education held by most people excludes full-time school and college work....The concept also excludes all the incidental learning that takes place in connection with the routine activities of everyday living.⁴

1. F.W. Reenes, T. Fensler, and C.O. Houle, *Adult Education*, New York: Mc Graw-Hall Book Co., 1938, p. 171.

2. Lyman Bryson, *Adult Education*, New York American Book Co., 1936, pp. 3—6.

3. Monograph on: A brief history of Adult Education Agencies in the U.S.A. by Ernest Payne, Fall 1960.

4. B. Morgan, G. Holmes, and C. Bundy, *Methods in Adult Education*, C. Danville, III; Interstate Printers and publishers, Inc., 1960, p. 12—13. *

Adult Education Interpreted

The concept of adult education, according to the experts cited above, is engaged in by people who mostly undertake this activity voluntarily and in their spare time and they do so to increase their vocational, personal and civic efficiency and understanding. In essence, the essential goal of adult education is that of enabling all men and women to live a fuller, richer and happier life than before. No wonder then, that adult education is the crying need of the hour to-day in India—an education that we all need, at all times, and in all conditions, for a re-orientation and an initiation in the science and art of everyday life.

When all is said and done, it must however be conceded that, the problem of definition is not by any means a simple one, since the term is not uniformly or consistently defined throughout the world.

What is Fundamental Education ?

As defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the definition of Fundamental Education, runs as follows : ⁵

Fundamental education is that kind of minimum and general education which aims to help children and adults who do not have the advantages of formal education, to understand the problems of their immediate environment and their rights and duties as citizens and individuals, and to participate more effectively in the economic and social progress of their community.

Education is considered fundamental in the sense that, it gives the minimum knowledge and skills essential for attainment of a significant standard of living. In a sense, fundamental education is an essential pre-requisite to the full effectiveness of work in health, agriculture, and similar skilled services. In the present emergency situation in India, when increased production—both agricultural and non-agricul-

5. UNESCO, A definition of Fundamental Education, Paris, 1950, p. 1.

cultural is the need of the hour, the role of fundamental education is, by no means insignificant.

Fundamental Education Interpreted :

Fundamental Education may be conceived of as being general, in the sense that, certain knowledge and skills are not imparted for their own sake only. On the other hand, active methods are adopted and it focusses interest primarily on practical problems in the environment and thus seeks to develop, both individual and social life.

In essence, fundamental education is thought of as concerned with children for whom there is no satisfactory system of primary schooling, and with adults deprived of educational opportunity. In its methodology and approach, it tries to utilize all suitable media for their effective development, both through individual effort and community life of a concerted nature.

Adult and Fundamental Education Distinguished :

To many, adult and fundamental education, do not seem to be different. This is probably due to poor grasp and imperfect understanding. For an effective implementation of a programme of 'mass literacy drive and liquidation of illiteracy', the meaning of the concepts and their distinction should be clear, before an adequate and workable programme of implementation can be developed.

Adult education is essentially concerned with those people who already possess fundamental education, and who would further so desire as to improve their intellectual, social and economic status through *further education*. Adult education is meant as a very indispensable *follow-up* process of fundamental education. It is designed to help such of those, who would aspire to excel others on the basis of personal effort and talent. It cannot be disputed however, that adult education is the 'Open Sesame', for a country like India, wherein we have teeming millions of illiterates, if cultural transmission and its processes are to be quickened.

All education, in a sense, is fundamental—in the sense that the laying of a sure foundation for a fuller and happier life is needed by all. Fundamental education is largely designed for illiterate groups. It is concerned only with the essential minimum knowledge and skill needed as a foundation for effective living and stops short of that.

So long as primary education has not made much leeway in a society and the goal of universal, compulsory and free primary education remains only an ideal and not an attained goal, till then, there is much scope for fundamental education, especially in a country like India. It should not, however, be forgotten that fundamental education cannot do more than 'convey comparatively simple new ideas some scientific basis of knowledge and rudimentary skills'. A well-organized primary school system is but a logical sequel to fundamental education. Till this is achieved, it is no doubt true that, the educational welfare of children of primary school age shall specifically fall within the purview of fundamental education.

An Integral Approach :

A large part of fundamental education is adult education, in the sense that it is concerned with the education of adults, but, however, it stops short of the 'further education' of adults, beyond the essential minimum knowledge and skills required as a basis for effective living. In another direction also, fundamental education would become much wider than adult education, in the sense that it includes within certain limits the education of children.

In our country, where there are still teeming millions of illiterates, rapid agricultural and non-agricultural production can be feasible only to the extent, adult and fundamental education are extended through effective methods of approach.

In both adult and fundamental education, the approach should be pragmatic. The emphasis should be on *functional aspects of literacy*. Both should be considered manifestations of an over-all approach, to be placed at

the disposal of the individual and society for the higher economic, social and cultural development of renaissance India. The attempt to be successful, should form the largest and fastest growing segment of education in the country. Will this be recognized by people at the helm of affairs?

CHAPTER II

BASIC EDUCATION X'RAYED

Ever since the Gandhi trend came into its own in India, that is since 1937, the concept of Basic education began to make its appearance. What in practice Basic Education means is education through crafts. Since independence, this Scheme has been introduced in primary and middle schools of the country on a fairly large scale. The fundamental principle of the scheme is that of Gandhi that : "the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work and that all the other abilities to be developed and training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child".

Since independence, the Government of India has been wedded to the policy of 'Basic Education' as a national pattern and quite in accordance with this, it has also been already decided that all elementary schools hereafter shall be modelled on the basic pattern. In the course of the first and Second Five Year Plans, the same end has been held in view, so that by the end of the Second Plan, roughly about 24 per cent of elementary schools will be of the basic pattern. This process has been contemplated to be still carried forward in the course of the Third Plan, with the result that all elementary schools in the country will be converted to the basic pattern, in due course of time.

It is nearly twenty seven years since the concept of basic education was evolved as a favourite cure for the educational malady of the country by Gandhiji. It is high time that a self-evaluation and assessment is made of the entire scheme in regard to its success or otherwise. Nobody questions the value of Gandhiji's contribution on the subject of education which is no less than that in the field of politics. The real value of his contribution is that it is like pebbles thrown

in a placid river, which started eddies of thought in those who were engaged in disseminating education. It is, no doubt, true that Gandhiji felt that the purpose of education was the harmonious development of body, mind and soul. In essence, according to Gandhiji, the cramming of minds with information was not enough; information should be of lasting value, which working in the crucible of the student's minds, should lead to knowledge, which in its turn, would result in wisdom, being the goal.

Now, there are many who doubt the value of the scheme of basic education. That the projected views of the consecrated political worker might have been coloured by his personal predilections is one view. People would now like to subject these views to critical analysis and know: how far has Basic Education caught on, how far Basic Education is practicable, and how far it is not, and if it is out-dated or it is of present validity only? There are some others who start wondering whether Gandhiji gave Basic Education to the country merely as a substitute for the then existing ineffective methods of teaching or it was merely an answer to the evils of the then existing society.

The failure of the Basic Education Programme—the pet project, has been sometime back, publicly admitted by the then Education Minister, Dr. K. L. Shrimali, and his colleagues. Even Dr. Zakir Hussain, a prophet of Basic Education has accepted it in his letter to the President of the Nai Talim Conference held at Pachmarhi (1962). In his letter Dr. Zakir Hussain had stated that 'Basic Education as practised to-day was by and large a fraud'. No one in the country has a better understanding of Basic Education than he and if he himself has openly admitted the failure of the scheme, it only shows how he hopes that this system of education would come up in a different form, after some time when circumstances were favourable.

Has the process of conversion of all elementary schools in the country to the basic pattern, been received well by the public? It is here where one starts wondering. Political democracy should ensure freedom in education also. There cannot be mere political democracy without

democracy in education. In any democracy people have the right to demand a kind or type of education they need. Otherwise, it is educational autocracy, despite political democracy. In any matter, social acceptance is a primary thing and more so in the case of education in which everybody's stake is involved. To the dissidents, the protagonists of Basic Education seem to be 'over-reaching themselves, having too many ideas with no clear-cut notion as to what they are aiming at'. To those who reason well, their doubts seem to be well-founded.

Since enormous funds and energy have gone into this experiment with a matter so vital as education to the nation, the failure of the programme entailing wastage of resources and precious time of the students, would definitely call for some heart-searching over the whole issue. A probe into the factors limiting the expansion of Basic Education or its ineffective functioning will prove worth rewarding. One such limiting factor that has been admitted by the Planning Commission itself is that "it has been largely confined to rural areas".¹ To overcome this limitation, "a large number of model basic schools are, therefore, proposed to be set up in urban areas".² But is it necessary to extend Basic Education to urban areas as well?

Admittedly, there have been many flaws in the mere conception and administration of the very programme of basic education as such. Gandhiji wanted to revitalise the villages and place them on a firm and secure footing—a restoration of the old order of things—self-sufficient villages. In evolving this, he conceived of Basic Education through which he endeavoured to create a social order, by bringing a new scale of values to the forefront, through actual living. Necessarily therefore, Gandhiji's projection of the idea of Basic Schools was meant mainly for rural areas to which he was avowedly devoted. But in actual practice to-day, what do we find? "Basic Education Zealots" have foisted the same programme for urban children as well. The cityfolk

1. Third Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline, p. 101.

2. Ibid, p. 101.

are now asking : "Is this warranted?" The net result is that the basic schools in urban areas are in no way different from their counter-parts in rural areas—just a replica. While this is the fact to-day, Gandhiji did not in his life time address himself so much to the task of administering basic scheme to urban areas for which he had little time. Besides, an unfortunate thing to-day, is that the main crafts in Basic Schools are 'spinning , weaving and basket-making, etc.', which in this 'sputnik age' may be of little utility to the city-folk.

There are contradictions in the scheme of Basic Education, which is now being pushed through at a hectic pace in the 'Plan Era'. While Basic Education wanted to create a particular social order (mainly for villages), the Government at the other end was attempting at evolving a mechanical and industrial society in which one wonders whether Basic Education can grow. The dichotomy between mass conversion of elementary schools to the basic pattern and a rapid industrialisation of the country is not understandable. While in the matter of education, we seem to be going back, whereas in regard to the other, we are rushing ahead of the times. Apparently, the leaders of the Basic System do seek their inspiration from Sarvodaya ideals, while on the other hand, the entire nation is aiming at industrial, scientific and economic growth, to be on a par with the modern Western Powers. Is it not time now that we make up our minds as to what exactly are our objectives? Naturally, therefore, according to some critics, the Government was not creating the necessary circumstances for the successful functioning of Basic Education.

Some critics point out that the programme of Basic Education would not have been the failure as it has proved to be, had the administrative bungling been avoided. Since most State Governments have already invested heavily in this type of school, there is great reluctance on their part to change the Programme, though neither educationalists, nor parents favour it. Further, it is pointed out, that Basic Schools with all the equipment necessary for different crafts training, are bound to be much more expensive than the

running of traditional elementary schools. There is some reason in this also. Buildings for these schools have to be more spacious and specially designed. Funds for these purposes are reported to be generally lacking and naturally the ill-equipped schools do fail to serve any purpose. To meet this difficulty, in the Third Plan it has been suggested that "as regards equipment and covered space, these should be provided by the Community. Every attempt should, however, be made to utilise development activities undertaken in the vicinity of the school for educational purposes, thereby enhancing the value of the education given and reducing the additional costs on account of land, equipment etc., which the school must incur to the minimum"³ But to what extent, this is feasible, remains to be seen.

Another charge against the Basic Scheme, particularly in Senior Basic Schools, is that nearly one-third of the total time is being spent in craft processes which consists of spinning and weaving. Only two other crafts, gardening and clay-modelling are also given some time. There are of course academic studies as well, but they are supposed to be taught in correlation with spinning and weaving which also yield some money income. The lacuna behind the entire scheme is, that there is over-emphasis on craft, with the result that little of other subjects is learnt through the difficult process of correlation, which can be an effective instrument only in the hands of skilled teachers of maturity of wisdom and experience.

Nobody might question the wisdom of "Learning by Doing", which is certainly essential in the school, but what is of doubtful value, is the mechanical way in which spinning and weaving have been rather elevated to the centre of the basic curriculum, 'without due regard to the environment of the child' which was the desire of Gandhi. This, according to critics, is likely to defeat the very purpose behind the basic scheme and retard educational progress. Hence, the critics would urge the Central Ministry of Education to revise this system early.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 101—101

In this connection, the Government of India would do well to emulate the British model of Elementary Education. Here, attention is drawn to the 'Scottish Schools Code', which merely prescribes the outline a primary course should follow: reading, writing and arithmetic, music, art and handwork, nature study, physical drawing, and at a higher level history and geography, written composition and for girls needle work. It may be noted that the various schools frame their own curriculum along these lines with the approval of the local education authority. Quite obviously, small children do need to be encouraged to make models out of clay, paper, and other materials and go on later to some elementary carpentry and metal work. They could, of course, be shown in due course, how to use the spinning wheel and the loom also. But the saddest part of it is, that to force them to concentrate on any one craft is to make artisans out of them, whereas the whole purpose of the school should be to give them a general humanistic education, so that they may decide later, in which vocation they should specialise.

The issue regarding the pattern of education has been decided as early as the First Plan by devising a new scheme which broadly consisted of a craft-centred basic educational system in the elementary stage, to be followed by a higher secondary course, which included 'Social Studies, General Science, Mathematics and three languages'. In addition to this Core curriculum, the pupils were to choose specialization and practical work out of half a dozen subjects like, 'Engineering, Agriculture, Commerce, Fine Arts, Home-Science'. The schools of which there are still very few which provide these practical courses, are called 'Multi-purpose Schools'. It may be noted here that the enrolment in Secondary Schools in 1961, was about three million and it would have been about four and a half million by the end of the Second Plan. It is rather sad to recapitulate, that even in regard to multipurpose schools, the record of progress so far has been a failure and the remedy suggested has been only the opening of more training Colleges for teachers of the specialized courses (now undertaken by

the Regional Training Colleges, under the auspices of the National Council of Educational Research and Training).

An anomaly of the Basic Scheme is about the end product. The students passing out of the basic schools and joining conventional schools later for their matriculation, have been generally found to be very poor in academic subjects like Mathematics, Humanities, Sciences and English. Very often, the students themselves have an inferiority complex. Even years after the introduction of this system of education, there are still no text-books available to guide the teachers and the students.

Will it not be wise to admit failures, to investigate the causes and to retrace steps before greater damage is done? Let us admit then that at least the pattern of basic education at the elementary level, as is functioning to-day, has been a failure. One view is that, having admitted the failure, we should not bring any more schools under this Programme. The error was made of "building the whole curriculum around a single craft, usually spinning and weaving in deference to Mahatma's ideas". In most states, this error has been recognised, but the idea of 'an activity-centred elementary school, with a constant exploration of the physical and social environment of the child' must be retained. The critics argue, that if the objective is to teach the child the use of his hands, it can as well be achieved through introduction of suitable crafts in the conventional schools themselves, instead of changing the entire system of education topsy-turvy.

Among a number of factors limiting the expansion of Basic Education, is said to be, 'non-availability' of required basic-trained teachers. In the Third Plan, the emphasis on teacher-training is being considerably increased. At present quite a large proportion of teachers are being trained in basic methods. By 1960-61 about 70 percent of training institutions will provide training in Basic Education. The remaining institutions will also be so converted before the end of the Third Plan. All new training institutions are to be of the basic pattern. Training facilities will be expanded as far as possible through the development of existing

institutions so that by the end of the Third Plan at least 80 percent of the teachers employed will have been trained, short-term courses being provided for the rest".⁴

If the Basic Scheme is to be successful there should be stronger emphasis on teacher-training than before. A mere proposal, as in the Third Plan, to extend the period of training for elementary school teachers to two years in all States* is not going to touch the fringe of the problem. For the success of the scheme, teachers in Basic Schools will need to be trained differently. Education at the primary level is of tremendous significance, particularly the first year of schooling requires experienced and intelligent teachers. It is not surprising then, that in England, for instance, separate "infant schools" are catering for children of five and six years of age. The English model may serve as a pointer to India in this regard.

As a natural corollary, it follows that the "drill-master type of teacher" will not any longer satisfy the natural curiosity of children about many things in Basic schools—about plants, animals and the activities of the adult world around them. The primary school teachers (in a basic school) should be in a position to handle in a masterly way a variety of materials and possess a wide general knowledge, especially of the life and culture of the area where the school is located. Can Basic Schools being staffed with such teachers as at present, deliver the goods? In the absence of the desideratum mentioned above, how else can 'correlation', a difficult process, but essential in the basic curriculum be attempted with success, without merely being talked about by the over-zealous enthusiasts and sponsoring authorities?

At present text-books are not expected to be used in Basic Schools but in the absence of a guide-book for direction, naturally, teachers go in for some text-book or other. It is hoped that the Central Ministry of Education, in its programme will see to it that a serious attempt is made to

4. Third Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline, Govt. of India Planning Commission, p. 100.

Ibid, p. 100.

appreciably widen the horizon of the primary school teacher. The Standing Committee to advise the authorities on primary education should give their attention to these problems and proper guidance to the States, where the authorities are so busy trying to operate the present unsatisfactory system that they have little time to study its long-term consequences.

It is worth remembering in this connection, what the Planning Commission has itself accepted. "In view of the large numbers involved, and the fact that the majority of the existing teachers have not had training in basic education, progress towards fully developed basic schools will of necessity be spread over a long period".⁵ According to the Third Plan, the Programme of Orientation towards the basic pattern, has however, been accepted by the Central and State Governments whether the public like it or not, and some work in this direction has already begun during the second Plan. It is also contemplated in the Third Plan that all old schools will be so oriented and these schools will take up such activities of basic schools as can be carried out with maximum community effort and with the measure of State assistance that can be made available for the purpose under the plan.

If Basic Education, which is avowedly the declared objective of the Government, is to make much headway in future atleast, the entire programme has to be overhauled in the light of the experience gained in the past. This means the immediate recognition of the shortcomings of the Scheme that have been blatantly proved and brought to light. In the words of the Planning Commission :⁶

"Progress towards basic education will largely depend on the steps taken to remove the shortcomings of existing basic institutions. This calls for much effort in ensuring adequate training, improvement in teaching methods, efficient inspection, and provision of suitable literature and conscious efforts to link the activities of basic schools with those of the local Commu-

5. Third Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline, p. 101.

6. Ibid, p. 101.

nity in the field of agriculture, village industries, Community Development, social education, etc”.

Considered from the point of view of national efficiency and increased production, commensurate with a rapidly increasing population, the entire scheme of basic education would need revision and a new approach. In this connection, the author would venture to suggest a change in emphasis in the Gram Sevak Training Centre (R. S. T Cs.) and Social Education Organizers’ Training Centres (S. E. O.T. Cs.) from mere mechanical spinning to something far more useful. In this context the author wishes to recall the pertinent observation of Theodor Bergmann :

“.....most of the institutions for village level workers (Gram Sevaks) have no workshop, where the use of the tractor could be taught, perhaps the *Khadi Gramodyog Schools* could be changed from teaching hand spinning to teaching the use of farm machinery”.⁷

7. See Theodor Bergmann, in his article, “Problems of Mechanisation in Indian Agriculture”, *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, October-December, 1963 Issue, p. 23.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY EDUCATION—THE ROLE OF INFORMATION EXPOSURE

In hitherto backward and underdeveloped economies, community development is bringing about revolutionary changes. This new movement is gaining fresh impetus and vigour. It is introducing rapid changes in a static economy. People are being exposed to new sources of knowledge, through mass media, social visiting, and contacts with outside persons. With the application of rational and scientific principles, these could be made to penetrate deeper into widely dissimilar cultures, thereby accelerating the acculturation process.

Information Exposure—its Effect :

Information exposure is a wonderful instrument for bringing about social changes of a revolutionary nature. It can build bridges of understanding amongst people in the same country, and has utility for effective communication research. Research in this area needs to indicate the generally relevant historical and demographic features of the study of population, the nature of the socio-economic order, and its system of organisation and relationship of observed patterns of audience-behaviour, to the arrangement of persons in the social structure. Related information in such research, should include all data on the existence and availability of mass media, the accessibility of mass media and its information exposure to media, and restrictions on such exposure, informal channels of communications, and communication elites and carriers of news and opinions, and their role in the communication process.

Of course, industrialisation also exposes people to new information, ideas, opinions, and thought that are new to social knowledge. But community development is rather

more wide-flung than industrialisation, which is limited and intensive. It cannot however be denied that rapid industrialisation along lines of planned progress, side by side with community development, may usher in an era of new forms of social and economic organisation, urbanisation, new avenues of mobility and motivation and aspiration toward higher standards of living.

Conditions of Success :

In a sense, the C. D. as a movement, is in itself a mighty information exposure of an explosive nature, capable of penetrating the length and breadth of India. But to what extent it can be a success depends on a number of factors. All people cannot be exposed to the same set of ideas. Individuals even among the same groups vary. When groups and forms of societies vary, naturally, how much more difficult must be *information exposure*, especially in rural areas, hitherto unexposed to modern communication media. The difficulty will be keenly felt in societies and communities with different standards of educational and intellectual attainments, and 'value orientation patterns.'

'Information exposure' of workers in the rural-agricultural community, will be different from that of workers in the rural town agro-industrial community. In fact, it is related to the structure of human relations. That is to say, who talks to whom, how often, on what subjects, and with what influences, are all aspects of the social structure of the community. The way a person is exposed, when, and how frequently, is affected by his social stratification, his ascent in the educational ladder, and occupational status in the community.

Similarly, patterns of information exposure do vary as widely as the patterns of social behaviour, with differing social status positions. These patterns develop as part of social activities, involving interaction with others in institutionalised ways with others within relevant and dynamic life situations. Such behaviour as collective radio listening, social visiting, and exchanging of information among kith and kin and attendance at movies with others, do suggest

that very well-developed webs of organised social relationship exist and influence the exposure of people. The particular type of exposure pattern common to groups of individuals, may be incorporated into their lives.

A Few Questions :

There are of course socially approved media and channels of exposure, and as a result, shared collective selections and meanings and understandings. How the individual reacts to information, news and opinions, cannot be isolated from his normal conduct, and behaviour in society. Whenever and wherever deviation from established forms appear, they have to be explained in part by a complex of factors associated with the process of social change as it happens invariably in the underdeveloped areas of the world, wherein attempts are made to bring about planned progress. In this context, it is worth posing a few questions such as : Does exposure to new information occur equally for all occupational statuses? To what extent is occupational status a major determinant of information exposure? What are the differences in exposure of different types of people, to information acquired through mass media, social visiting and contact with outside persons? Are there patterns of information exposure?

In fact, the form and character of information exposure, expressed in terms of potential sources of information, would vary depending upon whether one belongs to an urban or rural area, or whether one is a worker in a rural or urban area. The best thing to do would be, to intensify information exposure and concentrate on it by further 'communication research',—the research data may be collected by questionnaires, case history, and participant and non-participant observation, spread over different periods, taken up by follow-up work. This would easily lend itself to statistical evaluation.

C. D. in India .

Now in India, the C. D. is a gigantic organization, having a special Ministry of its own. The movement which began

as a temporary measure, has now fortunately come to stay, and for the good. It is now on a firm footing with a separate Department of Research in C. D. at *Mussoorie*, and other Action and Communication Research Centres as in *Lucknow*, and other places. Information exposure is, only an intensified form of communication research, and needless to say, that it deserves deeper and serious consideration at the hands of the Ministry of C. D. especially with those responsible for 'communication and action research' in community development.

The ultimate objective of the C. D. programme is, obviously the improvement and enrichment of rural life, through the aided efforts of the people. In the process of accumulating capital and developing natural resources, we must give equal attention to the development of its people, if the economic development programme is to succeed. A decisive factor in the success of the national economic development programme is, not the volume of capital available, but the attitude and the character of the people inhabiting the country. While capital is essential to achieve these in the economic field, perhaps even more important is the more enthusiastic participation of the people, in developing an economic system suited to their needs. In order that as many people as possible may benefit from the scheme, a certain amount of education of the less well-informed adults of the community may be necessary, especially when the ballot box has become the symbol of political democracy.

Community Education :

Should not community education precede community development? Will not community development expand more rapidly than now, through 'community education'? How else will community education spread except, through information exposure? Hence, it may be pertinent to suggest that, much could be done in this direction for spreading knowledge about C. D. through 'information exposure' of a scientific type, along rational lines. The field and extension staff, can, with the help, co-operation and collaboration

of eminent research personnel at the Central and State levels, draw up programmes of communication research of an elaborate nature, and conduct further investigations in selected areas in order to assess, how far and to what extent, the public are really aware of the C. D. programme and the movement as such. Thus, it is hoped, that the Ministry of C. D. would take more projects along lines of information exposure, as suggested above, to ensure a better way of life, through community efforts. Will it be done?

It is also hoped that, by intensifying these programmes, rich dividends could be reaped in the form of; the desire for a more satisfactory life, for higher wages and standards of living, for new experiences, for class mobility and quicker socialisation—all imperative, for effective participation in the new, rejuvenating, agro-industrial situation and thereby serve to motivate persons towards greater knowledge of the country and the world.

CHAPTER IV

CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND FACTORS INFLUENCING ITS GROWTH IN INDIA

Community Development in India is not a novel idea. A study of ancient Indian history reveals that local groups have long since been organising community action for their collective improvement. Rightly understood, Community Development is more or less an off-shoot of the past experience and in its growth, it has been essentially moulded by certain concrete influences, and useful techniques adopted successfully by some great men. In sum, Community Development, does in fact embody in some measure or other, some of the basic and vital tenets of Gandhiji, some methods of scientific agriculture (Agricultural Extension) as in vogue in the United States, apart from possessing certain unique but essential ingredients leading on to a radical social and economic transformation of the entire countryside, through a magic formula of 'Community way of working and thinking'.

A Study in Retrospect :

In the foreground of the C. D. movement do stand, a galaxy of personalities, who have been beacon lights and have left their imprint deep in the hearts of the people. Who are those great men, and what are the influencing factors? Among the many bold experimenters, Rabindranath Tagore, certainly ranks highest. His 'Sriniketan Experiment', even to-day stands as a great symbol and a shining example of a successful programme of 'rural welfare'—a miniature C.D. programme, which contained wonderful potentialities. The 'Sriniketan Experiment' of Tagore may be considered in a sense, a forerunner of the C. D. programme to-day. His programme was multiple in character, embracing many-sided activities—covering adult education, rural sanitation, anti-malaria Campaign, Cam-

paign against epidemic diseases and child mortality; programmes for water-supply, formation of co-operative and provision of relief in times of flood and famines etc.

The Gandhi Movement, in all its essentials, must be reckoned with as a great and vital force in the matter of a new approach to the problem of rural reconstruction. Gandhiji, and his compatriots must be credited with having set into operation and released certain new forces, building up new institutions in the place of the old, and thereby creating a wonderful mass upsurge and public enthusiasm. The Gandhi Movement for the first time in the history of India, sought a rapprochement of a new kind, by winning over the public into its confidence.

There have been quite a number of other worthy pioneers in the sphere of rural reconstruction in India, following the footsteps of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. F. L. Brayne and Dr. Spencer Hatch, are the two other notable pioneers who have initiated and dared an experimental approach to the problem of rural re-construction in India—not a doctrinaire approach.

What about the several path-finders along the road of Community Development? The later programmes were of a similar character, but they took a different colouring in its uncertain course. A reference in passing may be made to 'The Bombay Sarvodaya Scheme', 'The Etawah Pilot Project (U.P.) and 'The Firka Movement in Madras' (Rural Welfare Scheme), etc. The Bombay Sarvodaya Scheme aimed at inculcating in the villagers a spirit of self-help. The Etawah Pilot Project (U. P.) was another kind of a new experiment in 'rural planning', which sought a revolution in the life of the villagers. The Firka Movement of Madras, must be considered a landmark in the sphere of rural reconstruction in India in the sense, 'it was broad-based and thorough-going'. The aim of the Firka Movement was to enable the villagers to live a happier, fuller and more prosperous life than ever, and this object was expected to be achieved by enthusing the masses, enlisting local initiative and utilising local resources to the utmost extent possible.

The programme of the movement included amelioration schemes, based essentially on principles of co-operation.

Last, but not the least, must be mentioned the famous 'Nilokheri Experiment', launched by the Government of India, for the primary purpose of 'rehabilitating displaced persons from Pakistan, and establishing a new township'. It is this experiment of a stray and incidental nature, which has to-day crystallised into the present integrated national scheme of 'Community Development'.

INFLUENCE OF THE GLOBAL TREND :

The pattern of economic growth, and thereby Community Development in the West, has been of a different kind, when compared with that in our country. There has been shifting patterns of emphasis in the matter of economic growth and community development, in the economically well-advanced countries, as different from the under-developed and developing countries. In the West, the industrial revolutions had preceded social advance and, therefore, in those countries, the emphasis has been on 'making good communities better'. To put in a nut-shell, the *accent* has been increasingly on 'urban community development', necessitated by mass upheavals of societies due to the aftermath of the Second World War; whereas in India, the emphasis has, of necessity to be on 'rural economic growth and rural reconstruction'—with an *accent* on rural community development, particularly in the wake of Indian independence. India, being an under-developed country, has to achieve the twin tasks of both 'economic growth and community development' at one stroke killing two birds at the same time; a task peculiar to India or any under-developed country, which need not be faced by an already advanced country. Naturally therefore in India, the Community Development Programme or Movement has assumed an entirely different and unique colour far different from that of the Western counterparts.

Whether economic growth should precede or succeed social advance in India, or must be different as in the case of the West, is a controversial issue. But, what if both

economic growth and Community Development can go together? This is what is exactly a process which is shaping India's progress to-day, as a result of the various Five Year Plans and the integrated C. D. Programmes.

The universal or global trend in the sphere of C.D. particularly after the Second World War, has had a favourable impact on India. The appointment of a Mission on Community Organisation and Development in South and South-East Asia in 1951, is a great event in the history of Community Development Movement. The impetus that the C.D. Movement gained was particularly due to the U. N. O., which was drawn increasingly towards laying greater emphasis on the grant of special aid to under-developed countries, in their 'new bid for economic and social advance and reconstruction'.

C. D. Concept in India :

The present-day concept of C. D. has emerged in the wake of India's independence. As a national programme, it has come into operation with the inauguration of the First Five Year Plan. The concept as such, is not static, but is still growing in its significance. With our various Five Year Plans, the concept has also widened in its boundaries. Started in October, 1952, the C. D. programme has now penetrated the innermost corners of India's villages, and it is expected that by the end of the Third Five Year Plan, the programme would have extended over the entire country.

Basic Principle :

The main fields of activity are agriculture, animal husbandry and irrigation, which are the mainstays of rural life; but attention is also being paid to the development of communications, and to such items as health, education, housing, social and cultural activities etc.—Social overhead projects. At present, the work of the C. D. is being increasingly integrated with the normal activities of the State. A pattern of organisation has been evolved in which this integration is taking place to form a unified and lasting

welfare programme based on 'self-help'. 'The essence of the approach is that villages who come together are assisted in building up a new life for themselves and participate with increasing awareness and responsibility in the planning and implementation of projects which are material to their well-being. Self-help and co-operation are the basic principles on which the new movement rests.'

In the words of the Planning Commission :

"Every Community Block is intended to be an area of intensive effort in which all development agencies of the Government work together as a team in co-operation with the local leadership represented in Panchayats and Co-operatives. The activities to be undertaken are viewed as an integral part of a programme for improving all aspects of rural life, and above all, for establishing a sound economic base through rapid agricultural development".¹

To quote again the Planning Commission :

"The movement seeks to reach every family in the village and to create conditions in which the entire community can put forth its best efforts, utilise the local manpower and other resources to the greatest advantage, and advance on the basis of mutual interest and obligation. In this way communities achieve social cohesion and unity".²

Various Factors:

Economic growth is the result of human effort, and this subsumes a substantial rise in the level of both individual and national aspirations. Community Development, in its turn is expected to substantially raise these aspirational levels. Community Development has certain difficult tasks in an under-developed economy. The indicator of growth in a rural economy is whether, a nation is

¹ Pages 153—154, 'Third Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline, Govt. of India, Planning Commission.

² Page-154, The Third Five-Year Plan, op. cit.

regularly growing or is stagnant. Regular growth of the rural economy is of course and should be the operational objective. According to W. W. Rostow :

“The critical phase in the life of a nation which wishes to modernise its society is the stage in which it so adjusts its system of education, its social organisation, political life, and commonly accepted aspirations as to develop the capacity to produce each year at a substantially higher rate than its increase in population.”³

Regular and continuous economic growth in a nation like India, where there has all along been stagnant levels of life characterised by cultural lags, undemocratic social institutions, attitudinal die-hards etc., even once it begins, might take a long period of *gestation time* (roughly about 3 generations), to absorb and diffuse to the bulk of its population what modern science and technology could provide. Therefore, the task of Community Development in an under-developed country is rather stupendous—it has to break new ice and particularly to pierce through the limited horizons. Naturally, therefore, the task of development is to help aspiring people (as a result of raised aspirational levels) to learn how to grow, and then to make growth as regular a phenomenon as possible.

Factors Influencing C. D.

Chief among non-economic factors (*Social overhead Projects*), influencing community development, is education. Knowledge is the key to expand the limited horizons in a tradition-ridden society (seeking after modernity), and the processes of spread of knowledge lie in imitation, persuasion and diffusion. Planned economic growth and diffusion of knowledge through *effective mass communication media* will accelerate social mobility. The quicker acculturation process will weaken the hold of conventions of the traditional

3. The view of W.W. Rostow the well-known economist and Counsellor and Chairman of the Policy Council, U.S. Department of State.

society. Simple technical assistance to farmers, provision of fertilisers, improved farming methods and above all, *education*—all these steps seem to pay off with more certainty than do attempts to import modern technology. Century-old traditions and habits, superstitions, mistrust and above all lack of education, have made introduction of even simple reforms slow and uncertain. Though investment in education does not pay fast returns, it is probably necessary for substantial economic development, and undoubtedly the long-run *pay-off* is big enough.

Democratic decentralisation of planning and administration or what is called the introduction of Panchayati Raj, based on 'Grass Roots' philosophy, is a big step forward in Indian democracy. This, it is hoped, would accelerate national economic development, since 'it provides an institutional set-up for the people to express their felt local needs, harness their local resources, and participate in the formulation and implementation of economic policy decisions at all levels'. But at the same time, it must not be forgotten that democratic decentralisation might sometimes retard national development on account of the conflict of interests it might probably create between the different self-governing bodies, in their bid for political ambitions. More often than not, these conflicts might arise due to overlapping and duplication of work, or might be due to conflict between local and national responsibility entrusted for the various schemes included in the Plan. There might be difficulties, though not insuperable, in integrating plans of different bodies and national economic development might get retarded at every level. Measures to co-ordinate and integrate the various plans of different self-governing bodies may have to be undertaken without undue detriment to the autonomy of these vital local bodies.

In this connection, it may be wise to remember the trite observation of Henrik Ibsen.⁴ "Mere democracy," he said, "cannot solve the social question. An element of

4. Page xii, quoted by Havelock Ellis, in his preface to 'The Pillars of Society, and other plays by Henrik Ibsen, the Walter Scott. Pub. House C. Ltd., London and Felling-on-Tyne.

aristocracy must be introduced into our life. Of course, I do not mean the aristocracy of birth, of the purse, or even aristocracy of intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us”.

Will mere democratic decentralisation release the energies needed, under a massive C. D. Programmê? No. Only popular enlightenment and public education could do this. What is needed is diffusion of skills and not their dilution: A mass diffusion of skills opens the way to technical knowledge. Perhaps it is true that ‘literates will feel the need for getting machines; much more than non-literates’.

The Needed Focus :

A sharp look at the larger system must obviously throw into bold relief ‘the short-comings of the social system as handed down to us’—an arrangement under which wealth and political power were a monopoly of a small minority, and the masses were excluded from all incentives to self-improvement. For a successful implementation of the programme of Community Development, ‘an effective government, popular education and social justice’ do emerge as critically important factors. In the words of Ibsen:⁵

“Our ideas demand a new substance and a new interpretation. Liberty, equality and fraternity are no longer the same things that they were in the days of the blessed guillotine; but it is just this that the politicians will not understand, and that is why I hate them. These people only desire partial revolutions, revolutions in externals, in politics. But these are mere trifles. There is only one thing that avails—to revolutionise people’s minds”.

So long as the barriers to advance are not properly diagnosed and the missing links are not reinforced in time, even ambitious plans will remain only on paper. In a word, better education for the masses and perhaps, even more, important for the future economic growth of the nation, more effective discovery and training of the most able youths

• 5. page xx, Ibid.

of the nation,—these hold a key to a more rapid economic growth, as well as to a more effectively functioning democracy of the future than at present. While the drive for increased material well-being of the masses does dominate economic thinking everywhere, what is particularly important in a C. D. Programme of a massive nature as in our country to-day, is, the need for 'a revolution of rising expectations',—an effective programme, which will seek a raising of the level of individual as well as national aspirations, in terms of both 'economic and non-economic progress, rise in national prestige, etc'. Will such a fiery spirit sweep the countryside?

As George Bernard Shaw says, in his 'Man and Superman', "Whilst Man remains what he is, there can be no progress beyond the point already attained and fallen headlong from at every point at civilization; and since even that point is but a pinnacle to which a few people cling in giddy terror above an abyss of squalor, mere progress should no longer charm us". What has to be guarded against is the 'illusion of progress', which should not blind us to the lost ground,—of long unnoticed retrogressions. To conclude, "Community Development rests upon the premise, that it must seek out and work with every legitimate interest in the Community. If it cannot do this, then its programme must amount to nothing more than a slogan or a topic for text-books and seminars".⁶

6. Refer page-1, (Editor's Note) Community Development Newsletter, Community Development Service, Southern Illinois University, Vol I, Nos. 5, Jan—Feb., 1963, Carbondale, Illinois.

CHAPTER V

CHANGING PATTERN OF EDUCATION IN INDIA—SINCE INDEPENDENCE

A STUDY IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

India to-day is a free country, with her own constitution. In independent India, education is a state subject, of course with central direction regarding policy orientation. Free India and her history since Independence is but a natural unfoldment of a National Pattern of Education, though with no uniform National system of education. The centre in India has limited responsibilities, but a careful reflection in retrospect reveals that the centre has been increasingly concerned with all stages of education and its role in planning, co-ordinating, collecting and disseminating information and organising research projects and pilot activities tend naturally to grow in importance.

The pattern of education in the country before Independence was, as we all know, a legacy of the British system, of course with certain deviants to satisfy some Indian conditions. But it has to be conceded that the British pattern had its drawbacks. One great lacuna was over emphasis on factual information with its resultant memorization. Another drawback was that it was too exclusively literary in both character and content, lacking a sense of realism,—far from being pragmatic. In such a system, what figured most were instructions and teaching rather than learning. Naturally, no wonder then that those who profited most and suffered least were the top 25 per cent (pupils) and the rest were completely ignored.

Winning of Independence, though not an unmixed blessing, has in its own way awakened at least after long last the need for a national system of education, of course arising out of the ideology and aspirations of the nationalist movement. In the wake of Independence though not

necessarily an aftermath, the desire to revive the main strands of our ancient Indian culture and civilization and the attraction of introducing liberal and scientific ideas, as well as institutions of the West, has in no small way contributed to the philosophy of education which influenced the development of a new system of education.

Even prior to Independence, educational reform has been engaging the attention of the Government of the day and particularly to mention, there has been a spate of commissions appointed in the past in order to survey Indian Education—the Indian Education Commission of 1882, the Commission of 1902, the Sadler Commission of 1917 etc. And quite recently (after Independence) the Radhakrishnan Commission, otherwise known as the University Commission of 1948, the Secondary Education Commission of 1952 and subsequently followed by an International Team Study of 'Teachers and curricula in Secondary Schools' of 1954, which may be called 'the first Government of India-Ford Foundation Education Project' have also had the same end in view—reforming the education system at various levels by making education broad-based, to admit of flexibility for purposes of expansion along most desirable lines.

In what way can we say that the new system of education as is functioning to-day, is a departure from the traditional pattern? Sceptics might question the validity of the statement so long as the objectives envisaged are not realized and there is nothing wrong in their scepticism. Similarly there may be over-enthusiasts who may have nothing but admiration for the new system of education. The changing pattern of education in our country to-day is reflected in the many-sided segments of education,—in curriculum content, methods of teaching, duration of educational course (schooling), teacher-training and a number of other items. On the whole, a little reflection will show that the pattern of education in India, has changed considerably, and particularly since Independence, along different lines,—multi-dimensional, though there is much that is desirable. Some critics might also be right, who point out that all is not well with the present system of education, because sometimes it proves to

be nothing but 'old wine in new bottles'. It may be hard also to invalidate the above statement, unless there is conclusive proof that the changing pattern of education is really for the good of the people and is really desired by the people themselves,—a felt need.

What does a careful scrutiny of the objective of the New Pattern of Education show? A little deliberation will point out how it can contribute to the achievement of certain fundamental objectives of our present day society:

- (i) Consolidation of national unity;
- (ii) the economic reconstruction of the country to raise the common man's standard of living ; and
- (iii) the establishment of a democratic and socialistic pattern of society.

The achievement of the above objectives will depend upon a number of dependent and independent variables, and they will have to be interlinked and co-ordinated in such a manner as to make possible the fuller realization of the end in view. For instance, revision of curriculum making becomes an absolute necessity because of the lag of tradition in content and method, as well as because of a rather general disregard for actual activity objectives, over-emphasis on factual information, and a survival of our attitude of dependence on formal discipline alone (Whiteney). What is needed to-day, is an expansion of social and cultural dimension of the educands and this cannot be effected successfully without overhauling the traditional curriculum and the teaching-learning process. The revised curriculum content should be such as will make the learners conscious of the cultural values derived from the historical and hoary past, as well as the living present.

The changing pattern of education is also laying greater emphasis than before, on the utilitarian aspects of education, relationships to vocational pursuits, and employment, and with the implementation of programmes of economic development, especially the processes of industrialisation. Naturally, therefore, the implementation of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission and the

University Commission,—the introduction of bifurcated courses in Secondary Schools, the establishment of multi-purpose schools and Higher Secondary Schools, the expansion of scientific and technical education (Polytechnics and Engineering colleges) and the various other reforms in the field of Primary, Secondary, Technical and University Education are all geared to this end in view.

How is the National Pattern of Education being shaped and evolved continuously? Now there are numerous agencies for giving shape to the changing pattern of education, such as Commissions, councils, Committees and Conferences which can survey the national scene, examine specialised problems of national importance and character, formulate measures and recommendations for action and appraise and evaluate progress from time to time. Apart from the University Commission and the Secondary Education Commission which have been already referred to, there were other Commissions also, notable among these being the Rural Higher Education Committee (1945-55) headed by Dr. K. L. Shrimali, the Deshmukh Committee on Three-year Degree Course (1956-58), the Assessment Committee on Basic Education and the National Committee on Women's Education (1953-59).

One great epoch-making event since Independence in India is the constitutional obligation of Government of India, as per the Directive principle of Article 45 of the Constitution which lays down that "Universal free and compulsory education should be provided for all children upto the age of 14 within 10 years from the date of the Constitution". The position has of course changed since then, and the present decision is limited to the provision of universal free and compulsory education to the children of the age group 6—11 by 1965-66 at the latest i.e., by the end of the Third Five Year Plan period. The type of education to be imparted at this stage should be of the Basic pattern and the already existing Primary Schools are accordingly being oriented towards this new pattern.

When all is said and done, will it not be sensible to ask whether the quality of education has changed and improved

or is it deteriorating? When changes are introduced in the pattern of education, every now and then, should there not be a consensus of opinion regarding their necessity and acceptance, or deferring the issue altogether till public opinion is ripe for initiation? In modern democracies, particularly, in the United States, the people have the right to demand for the right kind of education and the democracy in education is such that the people get the kind of schools they so desire. Whereas, on the contrary, in India to-day, where there is political democracy functioning, democracy in education is negated in action, because, it is the political democracy that determines and dictates the kind or the type of education that the people should get and it is not left to the people to choose or select.

Education is not one-way traffic. It is bi-polar, in which the processes involved are multitudinous. So long as the right of every parent is not respected in the shaping of the pattern of education, the quality of education is bound to suffer. In educational democracy, it will be worthwhile to take an opinion poll of the parents before launching on any scheme of educational reform, especially in the matter of primary education. Political democracy will be a misnomer if it does not guarantee democracy in education. It may be true, as Shakespeare says :

“Everything must suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange,”

but not always. The point is that the old subjects can also be approached in several new ways, and given life and meaning to individual children, provided the class-room study is improved by practical application of the subjects taught. Very often, what happens is that in the name of educational change, there is ‘old wine in new bottles’: Therefore, what is needed, is, educationists and parents should see that there be no mere new labelling the old system of education as changing pattern of education but put new wine in fresh bottles. Will it be done?

CHAPTER VI

CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The problem of social change is of intrinsic importance. A theoretical analysis of change should distinguish between processes which maintain the equilibrium of a system, and structural changes, wherein a system moves from one state of equilibrium to another. Social systems under-go not only structural change, but differentiation also. Differentiation cannot occur, unless the concomitant process of social reorganisation provides facilities for performance of the functions in the new differential context. Every social system has a system of values as the highest order component of its structure.

It is recognised by everyone that "society is an expression, however imperfect, of the values held by a group of people". It is these values that make them a society. Otherwise they will be a warring crowd. Will not social life become practically impossible without an agreement of fundamental values? Is it not because of existence of these values that every individual is justified in expecting a certain pattern of desirable behaviour from every other individual, thus life becoming smooth for all?

A Period of Great Changes:

We are living in a period of great changes. These changes are genetic as well as mechanical, social, community wide, and technological, collectively, these changes are no doubt bringing about a new sense of urgency to organizations and institutions serving the rural community. Changes do take place in every society and that, very often. But how many of us are aware of them? Not all but a few. If everyone is to be made aware of every change taking place around him, then the nearest approach shall be only through education.

The Role of Education:

What is the role of education in this connection? It is admitted by all that education 'transmits from one generation to another the values which hold society together, the values which enable men to distinguish right from wrong, the good from bad, the desirable from the undesirable and trains them to cherish these values and live a disciplined life in accordance with them'.

For nearly a century, Indian society has been undergoing change. Our contact with the British, especially their introduction of the Western culture and ways of life and modes into our society since the early part of the 19th century has been making much headway in this century. The rate of this acculturation process became quick when the British introduced English education in India. The change has been taking greater strides since the advent of Independence, and more so since the 'planning era', —the phase of the Five-Year Plans which has been bringing about revolutionary changes in every aspect of life.

Consciousness of Change:

With the inauguration of the C. D. Programme in 1952, Indian villages have changed considerably—a change for the better, in the attitude of the villagers towards health and sanitation. There is also acute consciousness of "change" going on, and the social scientists are working at the valid techniques by which change could be effected with the maximum economy and efficiency. Since change is needed to improve many of our age-old practices, there is now great interest in the degree to which change in the villages is taking place, in the elements conducive to change, and in resistances for change, and how they might be overcome.

The Force of Change:

In fact, the forces of social change are operative throughout the community. The cause of this social change is no doubt industrialisation and associated urbanisation. In fact, a whole pattern of chain-reactions as between the city, the big town, the small town, the big village and the

small village, in coming up of which, we ought to be conscious. All this change, however, is not entirely autonomous. It is partly 'directed'. The coming in of the welfare state, is also making a substantial difference, particularly to the big village". In some of the big villages, there are governmental civil hospitals, and even a few medical practitioners have set up practice. People there, attribute their diseases not to any supernatural, but to some irregularity in their body systems."

What is the nature of social change that is taking place around us? "The occupations of the people have undergone some amount of change from their traditional caste callings. People from outside have moved into villages, and people from the villages have also left their homes in search of occupations elsewhere. There is some reason to believe that physical movement and economic change have altered the minds of the people to a certain extent almost throughout India. Life in India is changing as elsewhere, may be at a slower rate than in the west. It is only a question of time and opportunity....we have only to look for the signs of change, and build upon them as hopes for the future."

Induced Changes:

The sets of forces both autonomous and directed combined, have accelerated the tempo of change as in the case of untouchability. This has consequences, which need study. "...In former times the temples were not open to every one... it was considered sacrilegious for the untouchables to enter—but now they are open to all and benefiting in this: more money and offerings are collected"... (Aiyappan) "...however growing consciousness among the Harijans resulting in their refusal to clean latrines and drains, has led to the problem of cleanliness of the latrines in the rural areas..." (Prasad). The whole process of social change is beautifully summarised in all its implication by Dr. Karve: "Traditional ideas of pollution of the sacredness of the Ganga were undergoing change.... Old sanctions no longer hold good...."

Self-Directed Change:

Changes may be caused partly by autonomous forces and partly self-directed. It is this self-directive aspect of social change that has greater potential, the motor force behind which is, *no doubt education*. It must be recognised that, far-reaching changes can be brought about by education in the sense, that the right type of education can produce the right kind of change—desirable change, and the tempo of change will depend on the approach to education—a totality of vision and myriad-mindedness.

Before education can become successful, the need for change must be felt by the people: otherwise there will be resistance to social change. To facilitate acceptance of changes, a variety of incentives may have to be offered and the long lasting method of promoting change would lie in a properly designed method of education with concrete emphasis on appropriate or desirable behaviour or *social norms*.

Communication Channels:

In a country like ours, where many are illiterate, the programmes of education to be effective, must be put through several channels of communication—mass media, in which the people have confidence. What are the appropriate channels of communication or agents of change? In every society, there do exist methods by which information is communicated among the people. These channels of communication may include (a) the village story reader or teller; (b) the homes of re-organised community leaders, the carriers of prestige, where people gather for up-to-date and authentic information on various topics; (c) conversations of women folk at the village shops, temples and village wells and during social visits or while doing field work; (d) 'news and views exchanges' during religious festivals; (e) the village crier who informs the whole community of important news by shouting it out at night; (f) key persons such as the priest, the teacher or the head-man who read the papers or other literature to the people and pass on instructions from authorities; (g) conversation of men in coffee clubs, at threshing floors,

during social visits and sometimes while doing field work. Perhaps in other societies there are many other agencies such as: clubs, associations, religious institutions, voluntary health agencies and the like, through which information is transmitted.

Planning Programmes :

As a basis for planning programmes of education for social change and effective community living, the Social Education Organiser would need full data on the channels through which information reaches the people. He also needs to know, if there are any segments of the population that are not reached through any of the existing methods for disseminating information. Even in advanced countries, with societies having a multitude of organisations, studies have revealed large segments of the population who could not be reached through the existing groups of organisations. The kind of data needed about the community, its people, and their thought, feeling, and ways of working that are needed for effective planning need not be gathered by the planning executive. Instead, considerable impetus will be given to the educational programme if through their own efforts or study, the people discover for themselves answers to many of the questions. Therefore, in planning, the S. E. O. must first focus on the way in which he can most effectively work with the people. He is concerned with helping them to make such changes as they decide are desirable, not with doing the things he has decided are good for them. As he goes about this planning, there are a number of factors to be reckoned with, which may be stated as questions:

- (1) How can the people concerned be brought in on the planning of the individual or group action required?
- (2) Within the limits of achieving the goals, what are the various solutions that may be offered the people?
- (3) What informational materials are likely to be needed, how and when will they be used?

- (4) How will barriers to the success of the programme be overcome?
- (5) What will be the criteria of progress?

Of the above, item No. 3 relating to 'information materials, and how and when they will be used' is more important.

Use of Media :

In every programme, some means of spreading information becomes essential as the programme progresses. The S. E. O. in the Community Development Programme, should consider in this planning, what type of information material may be needed. To be effective, such materials, should as far as possible be locally planned by the people concerned, related to their needs and, if possible produced by them. Even in the U. S. A. many workers have reported misunderstandings that have been transmitted, resistances that have been stimulated through the use of materials developed in another country, or even in another section of the same country, for people with a different social, economic, and cultural background. In this regard, the Research Unit of the Ministry of Community Development at Mussorrie, viz., Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development should exercise its discretion in the choice of materials to be presented to various community centres.

In almost every situation, it should not be difficult to find resources, such as local artists, writers and printers who could produce economical and simple illustrations and informational material. Such a kind of enlisting the participation of local people, not only provides material economically, but it also contributes to the educational programmes. It would be better, if the individuals could learn the information, before they can develop material to transmit it.

Standards Essential :

Before the material is presented to the public, the Research Unit should have developed a series of conditions that must

be met, in order that informational materials be effective. In many cases, the materials might be presented in the process of being produced to see, if they satisfy the conditions for effectiveness. Through such checking, possible misunderstanding can be eliminated, and the likelihood of effectively transmitting the message greatly enhanced.

Timing Programmes :

Probably more important than the production of informational materials, is the timing of their use. Very often, many Social Education Programmes are initiated at a time convenient to the organiser and not to the educand. Since the people are the ones whose participation is needed for success, the timing of the entire programme should be determined by them. They will know when there is a real felt-need for information, and what types of facts need to be presented. The educational programme should be timed for some period when there is the least competition, for interest and action.

The retarding factor, generally in the successful implementation of any educational programme, is the attitude of the people toward the educator. Do they see individuals from outside their group as people from whom they can obtain help, or do they see them as authoritarians who interfere with their customary routines and impose burdens upon them? More often than not, the Education Organiser or educator's behaviour justifies this latter attitude simply because he has not carefully planned a way of work in which people will see his desire to be helpful.

Increasing Involvement

It should not be forgotten that 'education for social change' has deeper implications. Education for self-responsibility; education for leadership; and education for proper understanding. Therefore, in the operation of the programme, the criteria of progress shall be in terms of the extent to which the people take responsibility for setting their own goals, and keep them moving towards their realisation. In other words, the real sense of achievement shall lie in the

increasing responsibility assumed by the people to put into practice the practical information they have learned and, of their mounting desire to take other measures for the improvements of their living conditions. When the careful study, and planning with the people for educational programme have been done, few problems should arise in the actual operation of the programme.

The major task is, of course to check progress in terms of the criteria which have been set. Here, the programme-organiser can be most effective in assisting people to accept responsibility for their own improvement. He can, to a considerable extent, help set realistic goals, goals that can be accomplished in a sufficiently short period of time, to bring a feeling of achievement. He can help the people to see progress, even though the goal is not attained, and assist in revising the targets and target dates in a way that brings satisfaction, instead of discouragement.

Now that most of the educational leaders are set and ready; many have already started, teachers and parents are beginning to be appraised and be educated in their new rules; that the movement has been auspiciously launched, present a very good picture indeed. Is it not reasonable then to hope, that new conditions of learning will come, and a new era for our rural communities may be expected to begin? This is nothing but a challenge of social transformation.

CHAPTER VII

DYNAMISM OF CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND METHODS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE

Taking our country, it may be remembered that, we in India had a different system of value patterns before the advent of the British rule in India. The British introduced certain changes in the then prevailing social system, thereby making education an effective instrument of control and socialisation. Education, in the popular sense of the term, was something new to us before the coming of the British, though we were not uneducated. But the little changes introduced by the British, only served as a self-defensive weapon, which was exercised to strengthen their own administration. Therefore, the changes in the educational system introduced by the British, only widened the gap between the intellectual elite, and the ordinary rut of mankind.

The measures, like introduction of English as medium of instruction in Schools and Colleges, making it compulsory even at the primary level, adopting it as the language of administration, only ensured a special class of intellectual elites, far different from the common man a typical Indian, with the result that the Britishers produced on a mass scale (though limited), Anglicised Indians, who were foreign to Indian culture and ways of living.

One of the first things that the National Government set out to do upon the attainment of freedom was, to make up the leeway, and spread education throughout India, thereby bridging the gap between the elite and the masses. To implement the Directive Principles of the Constitution, the Five-Year Plans were drawn, which in its way had engineered several social changes in its wake.

On looking back, we may feel that we have not fulfilled the promises made ten years back in regard to the 'Demo-

cratisation of education'. But yet it is no doubt re-assuring, that we have not completely failed in our endeavour. Though the battle has not yet been won, it has not yet been lost either.

The change of administration in India has, apart from political gains, other advantages as well. It has been responsible for introduction of Hindi as a common State Language, supposedly better suited for bringing about Emotional Integration through a common Indian Language; for replacing English by the regional or State Languages for purposes of administration and medium of instruction in schools and colleges, thereby making knowledge easily accessible to everyone.

These are mighty changes no doubt, but not without their retarding effects. In the sphere of education, especially at the Collegiate and University levels, the introduction of the regional or State Language as a medium of instruction is fraught with dangers. It has resulted in a kind of compartmentalisation of knowledge. Will it be possible now, as result of this, for students seeking knowledge, to move about freely from one State to another, with different regional languages as mediums of instruction? The answer is, categorically 'No'. Such a process of change, in the name of democratisation of education—'education for the masses', will defeat its purpose, if it is going to stop with this—namely, closing the doors of knowledge to those coming from outside one's own State, as the case may be, barring out either entry or exit, besides those from the specified areas. This will certainly bring about, again, stagnation and a rigidly stratified society, as in the past (though of large numbers) not permitting vertical and horizontal mobility in the Educational Ladder—'Freedom of Movement'.

It must be remembered that, education is a 'continuous and life-long process' and it is not wise to measure not our achievements in this field, and always merely in terms of quantity (the danger of measurement of change). In our hectic hurry to bring our teeming millions into the fold of literacy, we should not lose sight of the fact, that an improvement in the quality of education is also necessary to enable

our youths to shoulder the responsibilities of a free nation in this atomic age.

Political freedom has enabled us to think freely, and act wisely, quite in keeping with our resources, culture and ways of life. Naturally, these processes do involve fundamental changes in their turn. If 'democratic decentralisation's is the corollary of better and more efficient self-government, education is the *sine qua non* for it. Mere political freedom cannot ensure better government, unless the people who govern, and the people who are governed, are better educated. "The release of Leadership" has to sprout from the "seed of education".

More changes are brought out by education than by anything else. Education, to be true, must fit in with the capacity of the individuals, quite in keeping with the needs of the larger whole, namely the country. The only way of changing the psychology, and social and personal habits of the people and to prepare them for the new tasks of democracy and freedom, is to *educate* them. All talk of social welfare and cultural progress, is an optical illusion without a clear image,—namely, a strong, persevering and unrelenting literacy drive. Only education can bring about more desirable changes; like change in attitudes towards the new sense of values, adaptation to changing circumstances in a world full of changes, and an awareness of the changes taking place around us, and a sense of appreciation of whatever is good, in the old or the new. Are we considering education as an important investment?

If economic growth brings about changes in living standards and levels of income, how can it do so, without a sound investment in education? Are we not thinking in terms of efficiency and better management? It is to be wondered how it could be generated without better knowledge and better skill. Therefore, it is better that we address ourselves to a task of a greater stress on 'education as a prime mover of economic and social growth' than before. Economic growth is a concomitant of educational growth in the history of Western countries. What is needed therefore, is a dynamic approach, with a totality of vision.

In our passion for change and reforms of the existing system of education, in our endeavour to promote the educational interests of the hitherto under-privileged sections of our society, let us take care, that our standards of excellence do not suffer mutilation or any set-back.

Education must be reckoned with both as a factor in production, and an item of consumption. Moreover it is an item of consumption of a special nature, not subject to the 'law of deminishing returns'. Further, it is one of the items of consumption which is an economic and social end in itself—that is to-day, it is one of the essential components of living levels in all civilized countries.

Education has now spread not only in cities but in villages, and in recent years demands for secondary education have been growing rapidly. Even at the collegiate level, we all know that there is such a rush for admissions during the months of June and July, that all collegiate institutions find it difficult to cope with the demand. Not only new colleges, but new universities have also to be provided to cope with the growing demand for education at the collegiate level.

The Government of India have indeed taken its share of responsibility in this progress. The two Plans were framed and executed, so as to ensure a rapid expansion of education, particularly at the primary level, because it is through an educated electorate alone that this largest experiment in democracy can achieve success. In fact, Government have also been assisting the educational institutions of the country by giving them liberal grants.

Undoubtedly, the numerical increase achieved so far, is remarkable indeed. Much more remarkable is, the change in the psychological outlook of the villagers themselves. The villager to-day, is not like his counterpart of yesterday. He is no longer apathetic towards education. He has definitely learnt to appreciate the value of education, and he now demands and expects that his child will receive the education that it needs.

One healthy change that we find to-day in the field of education is, children are coming to school instead of being asked to go, voluntarily and not unwillingly, and the question

of compulsion is practically receding into the background. Is it not obviously incumbent on the part of the State to provide, as a first priority, for education to those who come to the school, and as a second priority to those who are reluctant to go to the school? This change in the outlook, is the most welcome change, and is full of promise for the future of the country. It may be remembered that, no one can be educated effectively by compulsion, and unless the desire for progress comes from within, the individual and the State will not progress. Educationists should regard this change in the outlook as an asset to the Nation, and should devise means to exploit it in the interest of society and the nation as a whole. In such cases, the first step must be to try to boost the economy of the country on the educational side with programmes securing short-term yield, reinforcing missing adult skills in agriculture and industry, and undertaking general 'Adult Education' and 'Workers' Education Campaigns' aimed at promoting a modicum of literacy and change of traditional attitude. This has, of necessity to be accompanied by action to reduce wastage, and improve curricula. None of these short-term measures involve a massive use of capital, even though they may require special financing indeed.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION FOR LEADERSHIP

Towards an Understanding of the Concept :

Leadership, it must be admitted, is an art which conceals art. It is defined as one which 'influences the behaviour of others more than their behaviour affects it'. Further, a leader is one who is 'voluntarily accepted by others'. Ordinarily, a person will be willingly accepted as a leader if he shares the lives, general values, and attitudes of a group, and is susceptible to social stimulation. At any moment of time, within a complex society, many kinds of leadership will be necessary of the many groups and sub-groups within it; and different people may take the lead of the same group at different times, or in a rapidly evolving situation. In fact, the mother is the leader of the family in a matriarchal system, in a different sense from a father, when he is the leader of the family in a patriarchal system, like-wise, we have leaders of religious groups and leaders of nations. Even the bus conductor in efficient charge of his bus, has to act as its captain to get the vehicle moving, but if anyone at all is to lead, he must be accepted at any rate for the time being by those he 'leads.' The group must recognise in him, and he in it, a 'symbiosis.'

A land of saints and mystics, India has not been found wanting in leadership from time immemorial—before the birth of Christ, up till now. Perhaps, there are a number of others, whom the world does not know and who will prefer to remain incognito, but who are silently sacrificing their lives for the country.

Are followers wanting? No. What is needed is good leadership, especially at a time, when democracy has become the way of life in the country, and the 'ballot-box' has become the symbol of political democracy. The people have to be protected from self-seeking, unscrupulous leaders, who go all out of the way, to achieve their own selfish ends.

Real leadership, therefore, requires apart from a spirit of service, *good training too*. It is there that the educational institutions of our country should play an active role in shaping and moulding good leaders. Are the institutions of the day, geared up to this end in view? Well, there have to be greater leaders in the schools and colleges and universities, not merely people of high qualifications, but people with a high sense of duty, a spirit of service, with a vision and a mission.

The Need for Leadership:

It may be recognised, that our present educational institutions are not catering fully to the needs of good leadership. The need for sound and dynamic leadership has been increasingly felt at the present moment of change-over of the state from that of a regulatory pattern when decentralisation, delegation and devolution of authority have become the order of the day. It is the considered opinion of the author that professional institutions, which will impart *leadership training* may be set up at different levels. Will it not be pertinent that, just as there is 'professionalism in administration', there should be professionalism in leadership of various kinds? For instance, what is wrong in having an institution or institutions for training 'village-level leaders' like Panchayat Board Presidents, and Members of the Panchayat Boards, arriving at professional competence?

Potentiality for Leadership:

Potentiality for leadership can become real, only if a group authorises and allows. Permission to lead will be given only, if the group perceives and approves in however shadowy a fashion, at least something of the general direction in which it is going to be led by the leader whom it acknowledges. Is it not a truism that, 'there is a close relationship between the kind of leaders a particular society gets, and the kind it does deserve'? Here again, it is a problem of communication just as people could be easily approached through a language, intelligible to them so that they could be prepared also to hear him more if the truth

is going to be told rather than the untruth. It is, in fact, only possible to tell the truth to a group which will go half-way towards understanding what is meant.

Release of Leadership Forces:

For the release of one leader of high potential, we need a number of people almost ready to go in the direction he wishes to take—followership. Education for leadership, is not a matter of educating the leader only. It is educating the followers also. It, therefore, follows that those who are to lead, be it a group or a nation, must be really members of it; they should be men who have a stake in the community, they may be leading and the quality of their leadership is likely to depend on the centrality and nucleus and representativeness of their membership in that group, as much as upon the profundity and originality of their minds. In fact, a leader who will matter much to a society, must start to lead it from within. He will help those being led to feel their own responsibility, and not take that sense of responsibility from them.

For instance, in Public Administration, the emphasis is laid on delegation of responsibility to the lower grade employees in the official hierarchy. It may also be seen that, while this is accepted as a healthy principle, in actual practice people at the top, fight shy of delegating a part of their responsibility to those down in the administrative ladder who may be willing to take up such responsibility. This is because *the leaders only see, and not see through*. As and when they lead them, those who are led, will feel, that their own lives have more meaning and are more worthwhile. Such leaders will have more power within, than over the followers, and they will also become very sure of themselves, that they really belong to that group.

How to produce good leaders? For producing good leaders, great capacity for belief is of immense importance. A few people, having both power to believe, and strong intelligence, will have great influence. A society or a school or a college in which a number of people are living purposefully, willingly taking responsibilities upon themselves, will

help all who belong to it, so as to find real things they want to do, to become more genuine in feeling, and more responsible in action. It will be a community which naturally gives birth to leaders. Our problem in India to-day, is to make a nation of this sort in which, powers of leadership will be released—release of rather leadership forces.

Qualities of a Good Leader:

It becomes necessary here to enumerate the qualities of a good leader. The qualities which a good leader must possess are: (1) skill, (2) tact, (3) active intelligence, (4) consistency, (5) willingness to understand the followers, (6) impartiality, (7) originality and (8) superabundance of physical energy and above all, a dynamic personality. Furthermore, the leader makes suggestions, shows the way, acts as a model, makes policies, acts as an expert, controls internal relationships, and arbitrates whenever necessary. In moments of crisis, the leader will keep the group united and strong willed, by making its members conscious of their superior traditions. For instance, national leaders would help maintain a tone and a standard of taste, thought and sentiments.

Success of Leadership:

The success of leadership will depend upon the psychology of the followers, as well as upon the nature of the situation. Then again, a man who has led in one situation may be easily replaced by another when the situation and the needs of the people have changed. Did not the English people who were willing to be led by despotic Tudor monarchs turn their faces against Stuart monarchs? Again, did not the same Englishmen who accepted the great war leader, Winston Churchill, after the termination of the second world war, choose to express confidence in Clement Attlee? It is not out of place here to point out, in this connection, the problem of leadership in civil service. It is a common notion, that a government servant is a servant to the Minister; but a good civil servant need not be. One must distinguish between service and servility. A good civil servant must be a

good leader, and many problems in political administration can be solved if the political head recognises in the civil head the qualities of leadership, and the civil head in turn recognises in the political head such of those qualities as are needed in leading the country by formulating policies. If such a two-way traffic exists in administration, then the minister will be the political leader and the civil servant will be his administrative counterpart. Perhaps this is what Aristotle had in mind when he succinctly put it, "a citizen is one who must have the capacity to rule and be ruled by others".

Analogies drawn from History:

Political history of France offers the best illustration in this respect. Weighed down by centuries of oppression and misrule by the *ancient regime*, French people extricated themselves through a revolution. The revolution brought in its wake, the problem of leadership also. The rule of Napoleon for a time filled in the gap; but Napoleon had only certain qualities of leadership which fitted him well for a while. Qualities such as unselfish attitude, and non-egoism were found wanting in him. Even to-day, the assumption of power by Gen. De Gaulle may be attributed to the fact of 'social facilitation'. The majority of the people of France had in fact no other alternative than to vote De Gaulle to power. Maurice Ginsberg's observation that "majority of people seem to long to be led, and are only eager to obey" can very well be applied to this context.

Dynamism of Leadership:

Leadership of a dynamic nature may ably defend a tradition and custom of a nation. It may successfully challenge entrenched, but outworn folkways and modes. Leadership it may be pointed out, may originate in energy, intelligence or character. It is the expression of margins of uniqueness and inner superior ability. In several cases, it may be due to sheer personal magnetism; it may also come from flashes of insight. Even more, it may be accounted for by a balanced integration of many traits. It may occur at

the conjunction of ability, crisis and opportunity. The emergency of Gandhiji as India's leader, only exemplifies too well this aspect.

The Role of Educational Institutions :

With the transfer of power to the Indian hands, our country has immense potentialities for release of leadership of a dynamic nature. All talk of democracy will be a sham, if sufficient urge in this regard is not inspired. It is hoped, that this would be achieved by democratic decentralisation of power. The question here crops up,—“who is going to be the leader?” How are we to produce such leaders? Lovers of democracy will immediately come forward with a reply, ‘that it is the people who are to be the real leaders’. But can all the people be the leaders really? Well, all of us are not and cannot be leaders. It is a simple fact, that if there is a leader, there must be a follower too. So, what we mean by ‘government of the people and by the people’, is that government led by a few people for many people. The same idea was expressed by Aristotle when he gave his vote for ‘polity’ in determining which would be the best form of government. In other words, this is what is called ‘aristocratic democracy’. This leads us to accept the idea that even in a democracy, leadership is confined only to a few. The pressing need of the hour, therefore, is to tap the latent potentialities of leadership in a country. Given education and opportunity, it is not impossible to find many a good leader from among the masses. And it is here the educational institutions of a country must play the effective role, in shaping the future leaders of our country. They can, to a large extent, influence the direction in which the society is developing, by infusing a ‘social purpose’ in the young minds. They can encourage initiative and nourish intelligence. *As a pre-requisite to this, we shall have to trust the educational institutions and teachers and show them clearly that we are doing so. The remedy lies not in the displacement of the teacher, but restoring to the unique and the noble position which rightfully belongs to him. It goes without saying, therefore, that to achieve this, the lot of the teachers*

must be greatly improved, as also the teachers must improve themselves.

Group Dynamics :

To sum up, all leaders of all types are not only self-made, but to a greater degree group-made. They are products of heredity, coming under the influence of group heritage. In fact, they reach adulthood through the upbringing of parental and other groups. Groups not only stimulate, but provide them the opportunity. Group needs, as well as group dimensions, shape the nature, the direction and the scope that leadership takes. After all, leadership is basically an expression of group dynamics.

CHAPTER IX

A FORWARD LOOK

Since Independence, considerable thought, has been given to the aims and objectives of education in the rural areas, and the nature of institutions which should be developed to fulfil these objectives. Prior to Independence, this aspect of education did not receive as much attention as it deserved, but a beginning was made and some 21 institutions for higher education in Agriculture were in existence by 1947-48. The establishment of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research in 1929, following the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, was an important land-mark in the progress of higher education and research in the field of agriculture. This system of education was not without certain drawbacks. The students, trained in Agricultural Institutes which had come into existence before Independence, were generally unwilling to go back to the farms; they sought jobs only in Government Departments of Agriculture.

Winning Independence awakened the need for a national system of education, arising out of the ideology and aspirations of the nationalist movement. The desire to revive the main strands of our ancient culture and civilization, and the attraction of introducing liberal and scientific ideas and institutions of the West, contributed to the philosophy of education which influenced in no small way, the development of a new system of education for *Rural India*.

The Objectives of a New System of Education:

(How it can contribute to the achievement of certain fundamental objectives of our present-day society).

1. To bring about a consolidation of national unity;
2. To bring about the economic reconstruction of the country in order to raise the common man's standard of living, and

3. To help establish a democratic and socialistic pattern of society.

Only with the advent of planning for economic development, and in the context of the Community Development Programme, a radical change in the educational system, in the rural areas has become imperative. It is hoped, that the new pattern of education would make our people conscious of the cultural values of India, derived from the historical past, as well as the living present. Of late, an ever-increasing emphasis is being placed on the utilitarian and functional aspects of education, relating education to vocational pursuits and employment-job-oriented education, especially in the context of industrialisation, with a bias towards agro-industrial development. In the Post-Independence era, the establishment of multi-purpose schools, the expansion of scientific and technical education, and the various reforms in the field of primary, secondary, higher secondary, rural-higher and university education (including rural universities) only tend to prove and reinforce the basic fact, that they are all geared to this end in view.

A study of how the national pattern of education is being evolved may be interesting. This experiment is being sought to be evolved through the agency of various Commissions, Committees, Councils and Conferences which can survey the national scene, examine specialised problems of national importance and character, formulate measures and recommendation for action and appraise and evaluate progress from time to time.

This was first recognised by the University Education Commission (1948-49) under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, which recommended a complete reorganization of the system of Agricultural education in the country. Notable among others are, the Kher Committees on Elementary Education (1950-52), and Secondary Education Commission, headed by Dr. A. L. Mudaliar (1952-53), the Rural Higher Education Committee (1954-55), the Assessment Committee on Basic Education, and the National Committee on Women's education (1958-59).

The Objectives of the University Education Commission's Reorganised System of Education :

Corresponding to the three main aspects of agricultural education, viz., teaching, extension and research, the University Education Commission formulated three definite objectives of a reorganised system of education :-

(1) Training of farmer's sons who will go back to their farms and work on them more efficiently;

(2) Training of persons for carrying the results of agricultural research to the peasant through extension work and demonstration; and

(3) Training of persons for carrying on the work of research, developmental and fundamental relating to problems of agricultural and animal husbandry.

To this end in view, the University Education Commission has recommended certain institutions of the following kind:-

- (i) Basic and Post-Basic Schools to take care of the first objective;
- (ii) Farm institutes situated on model farms and associated with residential high schools to take care of the second objective;
- (iii) And Rural Universities for higher education.

The University Education Commission was the first in India since Independence, to review the system of agricultural education in the country. A number of Committees and Commissions have since followed to give more concrete shape to the recommendations of the Commission.

Very few attempts have been made in the past in our country to provide rural people with at least a modicum of a part of the educational facilities allotted to the urban areas. When educational planning got under way after Independence, many voices were raised in advocacy of opening educational opportunities for all rural youths. This resulted in the appointment of a Committee on Higher Education for Rural Areas (1954-55), which is generally called the Shrimali Report, in recognition of the work of its chairman and guiding spirit, Dr. K. L. Shrimali. In fact, this report is very comprehensive, which not only blue-

printed the purposes, structure, and programme, of Rural Institutes, but has also to a remarkable extent, anticipated many of the problems they will have to face, offering at the same time, constructive suggestions for meeting them.

The Committee on Rural Higher Education, which reported in 1955, took the view that Rural Institutes, which would train rural youths for effective leadership of the community, should be established, as distinguished from Rural Universities. The Institutes would provide mainly :

- (i) facilities for higher studies for students who had completed their post-basic or higher-secondary courses;
- (ii) certificate courses in subjects, such as rural hygiene, agricultural and rural engineering, and
- (iii) comprehensive teaching-cum-extension-cum-research programmes.

One may be tempted to ask, what is the basic philosophy or particular idea behind the rural institutes? As observed by Louis Smith :

“The idea is as simply stated as it is difficult to realise. The Rural Institute is to bring higher education to rural areas to meet in a rural locality the educational needs of village youth, to provide a programme excellent in quality but oriented to rural conditions and needs, to train village youth to motivate them for careers of service in rural areas, to conduct researches in problems relevant to rural needs, and to serve as an extension agency and cultural centre for rural folk, generally. These roles may all be summarised under three headings:—education for rural service; research on the problem of rural areas; and extension work in those areas.

Why Rural Institutes? The majority of our population lives in backward rural areas and, therefore, it is but natural that any educational planning must necessarily take into account the needs of these millions of remote villages. The rural institutes are expected to help in the process of “breaking

down economic and geographic barriers between culture and work, between the humanities and technology and between the practical and the ideal".*

The Rural Institutes which are now more than 13 in number spread over different parts of the country, located in rural areas, are attempting to-day a difficult job, what has indeed been neglected for years; they try to provide higher education oriented towards careers of rural services for ambitious village youths. They are an outcome of an increasing realisation that "traditional institutions of higher education, too academic in their programmes and urban in their location and attitudes, can no longer serve the growing needs of people predominantly rural in occupation and outlook". It may be interesting in this connection to note, that the accent of the rural institutes is on training talented rural youth for specialised jobs in Community Development and in order to achieve this, provide them with extension and research, to make it more purposive and responsive to village needs.

* Louis Smith, Dean of Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, U.S.A., Ford Foundation, Consultant on Rural Education in India, in his report; *The Rural Institutes for Higher Education—A study with recommendation*, Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1958, Publication No. 337. pp. 2—3.

CHAPTER X

MAKING GOOD COMMUNITIES BETTER —THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Community Disorganization :

Most of the social problems of to-day are relatively new, and are a product of the twentieth century economic and social situations. Cultural lag and resultant social disorganization are the bases of our social problems. With the rise of modern Science and engineering, there has been a discrepancy or maladjustment between material and non-material culture. Never before has there been such a gulf between technology and social institutions as in our own day—failure of our institutional life and social thinking, to keep pace with this growth of material culture.

Cultural lag is also manifest in the fact that our primary societies, such as the family, local play groups, neighbourhoods and the like, of a rural civilization are breaking down far more rapidly than public activity and community organization are being developed to take over their functions. This has led to a lack of personal and moral discipline, and much social chaos. Since personality and character have been personally produced by these simple societies, their break-down has led to personal as well as social disintegration. It has been the breakdown of these primary groups as the result of industrialisation and urbanization that has, more than anything else, given rise to the need for community organization. Hence, at this point, we should once again emphasise the significance of primary groups, both in the building of human character, and in the provision of social discipline.

* In civilized societies, primary groups have almost invariably constituted the basis of social life, e.g., the family has been the basic biological and social group. The neighbourhood consisted of a number of adjoining families,

which enjoyed their mutual society and aided each other, when necessary, in rural farming activities. The play group was made up of the children of a group of neighbours, though adults occasionally participated in it. 'The congeniality group' was formed by adults drawn from families in the neighbourhood, who gathered together because of a common interest in games, local problems of various activities etc. The rural temple was not only the centre of the religious activities of the community, but also provided most of the social contacts, which extended beyond the scope of the neighbourhood.

Since the primary groups have played an outstanding role in the development of the social process, they have been vitally important in the socialization of the individual, and in the integrity and preservation of all our established institutions. The economic and social changes of the past 100 years have, however, produced sweeping alterations in our ways of living, and the machine age along with the resulting transformations of life, has led to an alarming breakdown of these fundamental primary groups.

Perhaps, the greatest social revolution involved in the gradual, but wholesale shift of contemporary life, from a rural to an urban basis, has been the change from 'a society based primarily on personal relationships' to one 'which is mainly impersonal in most aspects of life and contacts'. The entire economic and social set-up of urban life has inevitably undermined the intimate personal contacts of the old rural society, and has substituted for it 'impersonal types of association',—secondary groups based upon new patterns of industrial and professional relations. The failure to provide, through various forms of community organization, substitutes for the services of rural primary groups as rapidly as the latter have deteriorated, is one of the most alarming aspects of cultural lag in our day. Unless community organization is speedily enabled to step into the gap, created by the disruption of rural primary groups, human society may disintegrate soon even without the demoralizing impact of future world wars.

Better Community Organization as a Remedy :

Now-a-days, community organization is moving slowly to act as a substitute for the social gap left by the break-down of the primary institutions—Community Development in a larger framework. It is through the medium of the organization of community forces in all phases, that this reconstruction is to be accomplished. Most of the processes of urbanization have created obstacles to such a reconstruction of community life. The development of community organization as a solution of the problem of disintegrating primary relationships, has come about as a result of the gradual growth of group consciousness,—group responsibility in the present social order.

The growing trend toward group solidarity is to be seen in the entrance of public organizations into, what have hitherto been private affairs. Social legislation has expanded in a remarkable fashion to cover fields of activity that heretofore would have been considered a violation of the inalienable rights of the individual by government. Laws relating to housing, tenant regulation and supervision, child labour, child welfare, municipal parks, play-grounds and other public welfare measures, are examples of the increasing recognition of the new approach to the field of group responsibility.

Significance of the Group Approach in Community Life:

It may be discerned from the attitude now assumed by education. Education is no longer a purely individual matter. It is now recognised that there is a community responsibility to uphold acceptable standards, so that education for the masses can be made effective. The modern emphasis, is, on fitting the individual into the community, rather than the mere training of an individual. Vocational guidance, manual training, organizing camps, domestic science, and the social studies, are examples of this group approach. The force of the group in the community is nowhere better demonstrated than in the field of public welfare. *Unless the entire community functions fairly well as a group in the matter of alleviating poverty or solving maladjustments,*

the entire programme of Community Development is doomed, and the community as a whole suffers.

The group approach to all aspects of social work, represents a new emphasis and orientation. Gone is the old idea that 'individual himself is wholly responsible if he fails to make a living or if he drifts into anti-social conduct.' The present theory is that 'society, when operating defectively is partly responsible for the pathological conduct of the individual'. Social agencies have employed this philosophy in their approach to giving aid. A complete picture of the personal background, environment, employment, friends, clubs, lodges and the use of leisure time, is obtained in each case before any help is given. In other words, the individual is considered in the light of his group or community; he is not viewed as an independent entity. The application of group responsibility may be seen, in the field of crime and juvenile delinquency.

These community activities do not imply that social scientists accept the idea that the individual has no responsibility for his action. They simply mean, that 'there is a growing realization that the social environment exercises a definite effect on the individual'. Illness, unemployment, and delinquent conduct, are no longer considered to be unrelated features of the individual's life, but are regarded as group or community problems, too.

The existence of the social worker to-day offers the best illustration of the substitution of community emphasis for primary relationships. So long as men lived in small groups, and moved in more or less isolated units, the spirit of mutual aid and neighbourliness operated effectively. There was less need for formal organization to aid distress. But with the growing detachment of individuals from their primary groups—the family and the neighbourhood, there arose the need for group social work. What is the creed of the social worker?—that all persons have one main problem in life—adjustment to environment. This also means that the social worker must understand the community and its possibilities, in order to be of service to those who are dependent

upon him for adjustment to the new life patterns,—ever changing patterns of life.

Meaning of Community Organization and Activities:

The trend towards Community organization in the 20th century, is one of the most significant movements in modern society. It has developed out of the leading social changes in the last 100 years—the revolutionary rural life, the growth of the city, and the disintegration of the traditional rural family pattern

The term ‘Community’ is used in various ways. In the broadest sense, ‘Community’ is the mutual awareness among members, of a social group of their reciprocal or interdependent relationships. It is limited only by the strength of this “Consciousness of Kind” or “We feeling” It may be vaguely extended, to “One World” or limited to the boundaries of a small neighbourhood.

We shall now use the term ‘community’ in a more precise way—as a group of people, who share a more or less Common culture and purpose. Thus, the community may be a rural neighbourhood, a small town, an entire city or a section of a city. The economic and social opportunities of an individual, as well as his views on politics, religion and economic and social issues are determined in large part by his social environment. The community is thus, a vital factor in the life of the individual, and the ‘community organization movement’ may assume great importance. By *community organization* we mean ‘the promotion of helpful relationships and experiences among all groups in the community, the unification and co-ordination of these groups to increase their efficiency and social service, and the adjustment of local communities to the larger social unit, of which they are an integral part’.

Community Development and Examples of Community Activities

There cannot be proper Community Development, unless there is effective community organization. What is meant by Community Development? ‘Community Deve-

lopment' is the movement to bring about 'a social and economic transformation of village life through the efforts of the people themselves'. The aim is to create a desire among the villagers to better themselves rather than thrust improvements on them. For this reason, the people are approached not through a host of officials, each concerned with only one aspect of rural life but through an agent—known as the Gram Sevak or Sevika (village-level workers) as the case may be, who comes in their midst and tries to implant new ideas in their hearts.

Difficulties in Community Organization:

There are many difficulties inherent in a small area, which hinder community organization. Many towns and rural areas are stagnant and devoid of leadership. There is often jealousy and clannishness between families. Religious and Political factions hamper development, and vested interests prevent co-operation. Often, the lack of qualified persons, limits the welfare activities, because most small towns and rural communities insist on having home or local persons to handle the welfare work.

The problem of community finance in the small community, often creates difficulties because of the fact that state officials largely control the distribution of funds. Although finance is a serious problem, many phases of small community organization only require a knowledge of means by which to make the most of the existing community resources, and the enlistment of local aid effective mobilization.

There is a need for creation of *forums* in small communities. The development of the '*small community*', is still in its initial stages in our country to-day. There are numerous facilities for encouraging citizen participation. The forum is a device by which community education can be furthered, it serves as a means of discovering the community tensions and discussing them in a democratic fashion. At the forum programmes, citizens may hear a lecture on current problems by an outside speaker, or one of their own group, and in the discussion period, following the lecture, they have an oppor-

tunity to ask questions. Two or more speakers may present different views on subjects of national and international scope. Thus, the 'forum movement' can be an integral part of the community organization movement, and it can be developed even in the small community where intimate contacts with others can still be maintained.

Region as a Community: (The Regional Approach)

The idea that a natural geographic region should provide the physical framework for unified community efforts, is also something which is strange to us. Whole areas, regardless of political boundaries, have common problems, arising from similar natural resources, geographic influences or cultural patterns. To treat social and economic problems from a regional point of view is to recognise the broad community of interest and to utilize the total resources of entire regions in order to raise the level of living for all. Socially regarded, the regional concept is sound; politically, there may be difficulty in organizing communities without primary regard for political boundaries. Because, States, District and local municipalities are sovereign powers in many matters, they can prohibit the use of funds outside their boundaries or resist the extension of Central Governmental activities into their area of control. Yet, one of the best examples of development of the local resources of a region, is the T.V.A.—Tennessee Valley Authority which has produced *a new high level in social democracy* (an example of achievements of community organization in the regional framework). 'The Columbia River Development and the Regional Plans of the Bureau of Reclamation', indicate possible trends in the future (U. S. A.).

Community Planning:

Planning in the community may be broad and include all levels of the population; it may involve the creation of a new community or it may be the rehabilitation of a section of the city or region. Physical rehabilitation, does not necessarily lead to the mobilization of the community and the awakening of social consciousness, but it is a means to

this end. It offers unlimited possibilities for community organization in the future. Improved living conditions through community planning, may include a number of projects like low-cost housing, slum clearance, health movement, playground movement, recreation movement etc. In addition to these modes of specialization and control, there are more specialized forms of Community Organization. All such activities represent the modern trend of community organization for welfare purposes. If unity and co-ordination are achieved through organization, then the field of community organization is unlimited. For instance, poverty, crime, and juvenile delinquency might be greatly restricted if the community sets about to eliminate it. Will our communities awaken to this need?

CHAPTER XI

ONE STEP FORWARD

It is recognised by everyone that education is the firm and sure basis of all progress. Education to be most productive, must be fashioned to the needs of the country, and developed with a clear understanding of the objective to be achieved. It is also important that steps be taken to ensure, that education in India is based on a well-defined pattern. This can be accomplished only when each part of the pattern has a special function to perform, and when each is complementary to the whole.

We in India are still experimenting in the field of education; it is rather unfortunate, that a clear-cut policy is yet to emerge. In a country like ours, wherein there is a variegated and complex culture-pattern, folkways and modes of a rich variety, composed of heterogeneous groups of societies, it is indeed futile to seek a uniform pattern of education for all—the country as a whole, especially in view of the regional differences in their needs. Therefore, in the evolution of such a policy, certain basic considerations may well be kept in mind,—the need for a change in outlook regarding the ultimate purpose of education in the rural areas.

Before education can become successful in the rural areas, the need for change must be felt by the people; otherwise there is bound to be resistance to social change. In order to facilitate acceptance of social changes, a variety of incentives may have to be offered and the long-lasting method of promoting change would be, a 'properly designed method of education' with concrete emphasis on appropriate or desirable behaviour or *social norms*. In our country, where the masses are illiterate, the programme of education to be effective, must be put through several channels of communication, in which the people have absolute confidence. In every society, there do exist methods by which the people could to a large extent, be exposed to mass communication.

The amount of success, therefore, would depend on the extent of our exploiting the mass media of communication. The secret of success, however, lies in the psychological approach.

In India, since Independence, the country is going through a great revolution in the political, economic and social spheres, laying stress on individual liberty, economic freedom and social amelioration, all having its basis on the ideal of a Welfare State. In such a situation, what shall be the ideal or goal of education for the illiterate masses? With the introduction of panchayati-raj-democratic decentralisation and delegation of all authority to the people beginning from the local level, the drawing up of all future economic plans will be by the people, for the people, and with the people. In fact, in the future set-up, the stress will be rather more on planning with the people than merely by the people in the ordinary sense of the term. This being the case, what shall be the goal of education for the rural masses, the future rulers of India?

The basic goal shall be, to enable the individual to live an intelligent, full, rich and happy life. And this is what Aristotle reiterated in his philosophy as 'good life'. Towards this end, education should take the following trend:

Since the approaches to the "full, rich and happy life" are open only through the printed word, literacy teaching, or the teaching of the 3 R's has become the essence of adult education programmes. For, it is, recognised as a skill that a man may use in attaining the many things he wants and needs. But at the same time, it must be kept in mind, that literacy is not given for its own sake. It is a means to an end. Reading and writing are considered as aids in the process of helping the individual and the group, to improve their health, productivity and social and economic status. But a desire to read and write as a means of improving their living conditions should be awakened. If they understand that they learn to read and write, so that they can raise their living standards, they will have a genuine inducement to become literates. When this is achieved, literacy instruction becomes

functional and the adults yearn for it, provide willingly for its acquisition and engage in it seriously. In this sense, literacy instruction serves as an essential aid to the adults in both understanding and solving urgent individual and community problems. It enables them to use the newly acquired fundamental citizenship and vocational skills for achieving something they really want and need. Therefore, the most recent trend in mass education programmes is a shift from more "Literacy Teaching" to "Functional Literacy".

Every new advance on the 'socio-economic front' brings with it certain fresh problems, to challenge the future of rural people. Consequently, rural education faces a never-ending responsibility to adapt to new needs, and at the same time to support, whatever is fundamental and enduring in rural life. In fact, the widespread application of science and technology to problems of rural living, and the accelerating pace of a change make 'education and re-education' a lifelong necessity.

We must develop in the young people, qualities of character, the skills and resiliency to change which will fit them for whatever conditions may confront them, keeping in mind that we need rural leaders—men and women who can take their places in rural society—outstanding farmers, school executives, businessmen, farm-organization heads, and Government officials.

Very few attempts have been made in the past to provide rural people, with at least a modicum or a part of the education facilities allotted to urban areas. Only since Independence, considerable thought has been given to the aims and objectives of education in the rural areas, and the nature of institutions which should be developed to fulfil these objectives. Prior to Independence, this aspect of education did not receive as much attention as it deserved.

What shall be our new approach in educating the rural masses? We must not think of rural education as encompassing 'only that learning which takes place in schools and colleges', but also as including the whole learning process in the rural community. In this connection, institutional

education must not be viewed as an isolated phase of our rural society, but as an integral part thereof. This, in turn, calls for more adequate rural education more educational facilities, bigger budgets, better administration and expanded curricula.

Rural education, in the light of recent socio-economic development in the country, has of necessity to be functional—rather pragmatic. Education to be functional, must be meaningful to people, have value in helping them solve the problems associated with improving their level of living, and be closely related to real life situations. In certain aspects, the curriculum programmes at present are “too academic and too abstract”. Thus, there is a need for a re-arrangement of the “As-You-Like-It” curricula to “Regularly Organised Curriculum”, which will carry better conviction with the villagers than at present.

Rural education is, of course, a vital phase of our whole society. But, if rural education is to play its vital role well, in the context of the socio-economic development taking place in the country, ‘in the disguised form of Community Development Programmes’, it should be recognised as a distinctive field in itself—Rural Education. At the same time, it must be recognised, *that there are problems in education in rural areas which certainly warrant a differentiation in the professional preparation of our rural teachers as well as curricular content—i.e., the problem of enrolment of children for schools in urban areas is not the same as in rural areas; here it is essentially a problem of psychological motivation in rural areas, as different from that of the urban ones.*

Therefore, if Rural India is to be the training ground for the Nation’s leaders of to-morrow, Rural Education in India must undergo, a thorough overhauling,—a *revolution in its quality*. This means, that we must discard the age-old mass production model of education that has served us well in the past, and that when created, was as good as the economy could support. *But this mass production method, which moves learners along, through standardised experiences, at uniform rates, is no longer good enough to meet the needs*

of to-day. We must make the education of the villagers more exciting, more meaningful, and we must prepare them among other things, to be able to make full use of the *rural environment as a laboratory* for some of the richest learning experiences that can come to our children.

A note of caution may be well advised in our approach to education. In so far as we consider the actual Indian conditions, education alone or, by itself, is not capable of improving the rural conditions of life. Perhaps, what is needed for more than anything else, is mainly a means of better urbanization of rural areas. Then, quite naturally, allied to educational programmes, must be improved organization of rural production, new sources of financial credit, better distribution of available lands and relative programmes for rural social services. The basic experiment to eradicate illiteracy in the countrysides, which we are carrying on at present can have *major rural results*, only if they have the solid support of these other plans. Such a situation can certainly be characterised as "One Step Forward" in Education for Rural India.

CHAPTER XII

PROGRESS OF ADULT AND FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION IN INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE

The problem of Adult literacy in India has not escaped the attention of our Educational Planners. Perhaps no programme is as significant and encouraging as the adult literacy campaign. India, with the winning of Independence, has become more or less a laboratory of political thought, the "ballot box" being its first symbol. If the power conferred is not to be misused, the responsibility, conferred by adult suffrage will have to be fully discharged. What is to be increasingly realized, is that mere extension of franchise is not a panacea for political ills. What is needed more than anything else is, "education for responsibility". It is encouraging to note, that in this connection, the Government of India have in order to spread literacy among the adult population and to impart instruction in health and hygiene, established in Delhi a National Fundamental Education Centre. This centre has, since its inception been doing useful work in the field of social education. It has drawn up a programme of training District Social Education Organizers who will be responsible for co-ordinating all social education activities in their respective areas.

In India's developmental planning, the greatest task is, of course, the elimination of illiteracy. Beyond illiteracy, adult education has of necessity to fan itself out into various channels—academic and vocational courses. Besides, it has also to be recognised, that no country in this age can afford to neglect education of its people for social responsibility with an air of disdain. Again, it may be pertinent to point out that, emphasis in Adult Education has to be given to informal methods of education, and the utilization of modern media of mass communication on a wide scale as an agent of "information exposure".

Both general and vocational education of the populace assume further importance during the transitional period of India's post-Independence era, at a time as at present, especially when the country is undergoing vast special changes at a rate unprecedented in its history. What is the nature of this change? It is a change from a "pre-literate to a literate society, from an agricultural to an industrial society, from a number of local communities united by a common culture and sentiment, to a well integrated nation". For this purpose the adult population of the country would need new skills in the place of the old, modern knowledge and constructive attitude—the need for both vocational and general education. The import of social education here is very significant—to impart the much needed general education to adults (Fundamental Education). Does not the democratic way of life in India which is forging ahead, make such a programme of adult education absolutely necessary? It is quite fitting therefore, that social education forms an integral part of the Community Development Programme in India, ever since it was inaugurated in 1952. It is of course true, that the shape of things to come in a programme of social education, will depend to a large extent, on what are the significant areas in the lives of hundreds of millions of adults, quite outside their specific occupational patterns, wherein also the acceptance of sociological changes becomes *a must* in their own interest—in the interest of socio-economic and technological development.

The programme now drawn up by the National Fundamental Education Centre established at New Delhi, embraces six significant sectors or areas in general, such as: the social organization, the family life, the education, health and hygiene, work, and recreation. The analysis of this programme, which is now in operation in the country, seems to reveal that it is broadbased and well phased, having a practical bias and emphasis on preparing the people for social and economic development, by evoking their collective responsibility. In this programme of social education, we see people on the onward march towards progress—people moving forward as communities, permitting horizontal and vertical mobility

Recent Facts and Figures about Adult Literacy:

The existing picture of literacy rate, in our country is distressing indeed. Between 1951 and 1961, literacy only increased from 17 percent to 24 percent. Yet, a survey conducted just before the 1961 census as a pre-test revealed an increase in female literacy from 7.9 percent in 1951 to 28.8 percent at present, while literacy among men rose from 24.9 percent to 51.7 percent. This gap between the All India average and the sample reveals the 'leeway to be made'.

Quite recently, the Study Team on Social Education, under the leadership of Dr. B. N. Jha, Vice-Chancellor, Jodhpur University, appointed by the Planning Commission, has viewed with concern and alarm the slack tempo of literacy rate in the country. The removal of adult illiteracy by 1975-80 is the target suggested by the Study Team on Plan Projects on Social Education. The Team has suggested the provision of facilities, for pastime and further education for population between the age-group 15-45. In this connection, the various State Governments have been requested to draw up integrated programmes accordingly for the 4th Plan.

According to reliable sources it is estimated that 'the total number of illiterates in India "(above the age of 5) rose from 25.87 crores to 26.46 crores during the decade 1951-61, inspite of the spread of substantial educational facilities and a rise in the percentage of literacy from 19 to about 28".*

"Faced with these figures, the Planning Commission admitted that the problem of adult literacy had not been given sufficient attention. Its neglect has seriously affected the development effort of the country".**

* Refer Article on 'A Probe into adult attitudes to literacy' by Dr. R.S. Mani and R. Subramanian, in INDIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION, Vol. XXV, May 1964 Issue.

** Communication of the Govt. of India as circulated in various newspapers, i.e. Refer, "The Indian Review", Vol. XXV, Sept. 1964, No. 9, page 348.

It is quite natural and in the fitness of things, then, that the Team cautions not to stop the programme for education for adult literacy. As is quite evident, progress in adult Literacy is slow. And "the percentage is already low and it may become lower still in view of the enormous increase in population". The Team has been wise in shifting the emphasis now from pure literacy programmes to "adequate provision for libraries, reading materials, book production and literature for neo-literates". In this connection, the role of the Panchayats and Municipalities in these promotional programmes cannot be under-estimated.

Quite recently, a national study group has been formed to prepare pilot projects on adult literacy, to be carried out with UNESCO assistance.

Inaugurating a six-day meeting of the group at New-Delhi, Mr. P. N. Kirpal, Secretary, Ministry of Education, said India has about 180 to 200 million adult illiterates and they could not remain indifferent to the problem.***

Besides drawing up Pilot Projects, the group will also prepare the agenda for the UNESCO—sponsored joint Indo-Pakistan Workshop to be held towards the end of 1964. A study group in Pakistan will meet from September 28 to October 3, on a similar assignment and the Indo-Pakistan Workshop at the apex would finalise the pilot projects to be undertaken in the sub-continent.

The result of this first experimental phase would be evaluated to provide the basis for subsequent phases.

To quote the Newspaper report : ****

"Mr. Kirpal said, with the annual increase in adult illiterates by about 3.5 million, India had to aim at producing substantial results in the shortest possible time. The introduction of Panchayatraj had brought about better appreciation of the need and importance of literacy in everyday life.

"Calling for social efforts to raise the level of literacy among women, Mr. Kirpal suggested that the projects

*** Refer: The Hindu (Madras), dated Sept. 22, 1964.

**** Refer: Same Source in the Hindu dated Sept. 22, 1964.

should aim at craft-oriented literacy so that women benefited both by literacy and by a useful occupation

“Mr. Kirpal also suggested the need for special projects to cover tribal areas and to meet the requirements of industrial workers. He suggested the use of T. V. for mass education, with UNESCO assistance. If there were technical difficulties in using T.V., such a finding should be made known. Other media were yet to be effectively used in spreading literacy. A well-balanced adult education programme should provide facilities for continuing education to prevent relapse into illiteracy and for evaluation of the progress”.

When all is said and done, the job is even now still less than half done, but yet it is a great step forward and its significance which is outstanding to the future of India, is impossible to exaggerate.

It may be worth examining here, how Adult Education work is being carried out in India by the various Agencies—the work of intensive activity to educate the masses of India. Adult education is now in the charge of : (a) Voluntary organizations, (b) Semi-government organizations, (c) The State Government and (d) the Government of India.

The Voluntary Organizations which run literacy classes for the most part, are legion, i.e. the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, A.C.C. & N. C. C. and the various Social Service Leagues in Colleges and Universities, the Bharat Sevak Samaj etc. The work of these organization can of course be traced in most cases, to a long, historical and unique past, but by its very nature it has never been systematic in the real sense of the term, and well-organised, but rather spasmodic and interrupted. Very rarely do they take up work in civic and health education.

The semi-government organizations on the other hand, like the Central Social Welfare Board, with its State Social Welfare Boards, though of recent origin, do have something to its credit—a proud record of work in several spheres. On the other hand, in the States, by far the most important adult education work is now being done in the various

Community Development Centres. And the main activity of their adult education programme centres has been literacy, recreation and the starting of the community centres—a new experiment in community education of a revolutionary nature. In fact, on September 30, 1958 according to reliable statistics, nearly 87 thousand Adult Literacy Centres and 103 thousand community centres were functioning in the country. It has also been claimed that nearly 2,968,000 adults have already been made literate by this.

At the Central level, the work of Adult Education is being carried out by the various Ministries in the Government of India. In fact, the different ministries have their independent adult education programmes for their employees. Some of them, like the Ministry of Railways have their literacy programmes. Mostly, however, the programmes are confined to visual education through film shows, some entertainment, classes for women in crafts of interest to them, and rudimentary library work. Particularly to mention, is, the latest feature, namely the introduction of a "Mobile library service" for railway employees in certain regions. This novel attempt has been recently inaugurated in the Southern Railways at Trichy Division in Madras State. If this works successfully, it deserves encouragement and emulation of being pursued on a similar scale, in the other railways also.

The service rendered by the Army in this regard is really commendable. It is reliably learnt that in the army, illiteracy has been practically wiped out. Another important division of the Central government which has taken upon itself the responsibility of the great and noble task of "Adult education drive" is the Ministry of Labour, wherein, there is a need for a concerted drive of literacy campaigns. This Ministry has recently launched on a new scheme of "Workers Education Movement" which is well nigh on its wheels. The scheme of "Workers education" is an all-embracing one. Under this scheme, regular classes are organised for adult workers to combat illiteracy and to develop the ability to acquire new industrial skills and the capacity to hold responsible positions. In

order to launch the programme on a large scale for the mass of workers, certain efficient workers or leaders are first selected and given training for a specific period, and they in turn, after the training is over, go back to their original work and are expected to train other workers. Thus, an in-service programme of training and education has been contemplated by the Ministry of Labour under the 'Workers' Education Programme'.

The Education of workers under this scheme takes the form of education through films of educational interest, radio broadcasts in workshops, canteens and welfare centres, provision of libraries, reading rooms etc. The workers are also educated in matters of health and hygiene, taking the form of posters, leaflets, films, demonstrations and the health week, health propaganda, and the health committees. It also takes other forms such as, development of their cultural life and the raising of their standard of living, and the administration of welfare measures. The efficient administration of welfare activities requires that the persons concerned shall be able to read and fill forms. In the ultimate analysis, the extent of the workers' participation in the improvement of their working and living conditions will largely depend on the development of their capacities through education. In this connection it is always better to keep in mind, that education is not to be understood to imply only ability to read and write, but also cultural development and vocational competency.

An all-out effort, mainly official, in the field of adult education, is carried extensively through the Union Ministry of Education; it co-ordinates practically the work of adult education in the entire country and is providing in a way, leadership in ideas in this specific field of activity. The Education Ministry has been recently sponsoring "literacy workshops" for the training of authors for producing reading materials for neo-literates. Such workshops would train twenty to twenty five authors for a period of one month. Annually, such workshops are organised and prizes are given for the best books. Another noteworthy feature is "The National Book Trust" which has been set

up quite recently, producing outstanding books at cheap rates and in large numbers, in almost all regional languages of India.

Does not the above account of educational progress in India leave on us an impression that education is forging ahead in Free India?

In sum, the rapid spread of literacy requires eternal vigilance on the part of the Government of India. It should assume the form of a 'mass movement' as it happened in the U. S. S. R. In Western countries, mass education preceded rapid industrialisation, bringing in its wake, efficiency and moral responsibility. This is a lesson which India has to learn from the West. In this connection, the recommendations of the experts who met under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Paris should prove encouraging and deserve deeper consideration. The experts who met, have recommended certain new techniques for the rapid spread of literacy, in various parts of the world. The new techniques include, radio, television, films, electronic computers and teaching machines, and in the foreseeable future, the use of satellites. The experts have also recognised that new techniques in education must be studied and employed to help some of the existing education ills. The meeting recommended a wide exchange of information and materials concerning all aspects of technology in education and stressed the need for training specialists, administrators, and teachers in new techniques.

Another important recommendation of the meeting of the UNESCO experts, is 'that frequencies and facilities for educational, radio, and television services should be universally available'. It also emphasised that 'efforts should be made to develop and mass produce, as rapidly as possible low-cost, battery powered radio, television and recording equipment'. Much of course depends on the allocation of adequate funds by the UNESCO to the 104 member nations for the new techniques demonstration centres to help eliminate illiteracy from the world as fast as possible.

CHAPTER XIII

ROLE OF EXTENSION EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Experts in 'Theories of Economic Growth' are generally of the opinion that some of the proximate causes of economic growth are, the effort to economise, the accumulation of knowledge and the accumulation of capital. It must be admitted that, growth is the result of human effort in several directions. If nature had been kind and bountiful to man, no human effort is worth the while and perhaps, the game is not worth the candle. Is it not true then, that man accepting the varied challenges presented by Nature—his environment—is able in a number of ways to wrest from nature more products for less effort? As W. Arthus Lewis puts it :

"To accept the challenge of nature is to be willing to experiment, to seek out opportunities, to respond to openings and generally to manœuvre. The greatest growth occurs in societies where men have an eye to the economic chance and are willing to stir themselves to seize it".¹

The study of history makes it clear to us that, societies have differed greatly and widely too, from each other in the extent to which their adventure to seize and exploit economic opportunities to the best advantage. It is needless to point out that the developed countries had the desirable qualities in abundance and were therefore able to grow, whereas the underdeveloped countries (now trying to develop of course) did not take the initiative to do so. How is this to be accounted for? This is to be adduced to differences in the behaviour patterns of the people in the under-developed countries. This in turn may be traced to three distinct causes, namely, to differences in the available opportuni-

1. W. Arthus Lewis: THE THEORY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, 1961 p. 23.

ties; to differences in the valuation of material goods relatively to the effort required to get them; and to differences to the extent to which institutions encourage effort, either by removing obstacles in its way, or by ensuring to the individual the fruit of his effort. There are also many real psychological differences in the willingness to make effort.

How to overcome the setbacks or the deterrents that have been standing in the way of economic growth? This is well-nigh a problem situation for analysis of the underdeveloped economy, particularly so, for a developing economy of ours. Experts in economic growth point out that the solution, or the way out, lies in according top priority to education, since education, according to them is a pre-requisite to all progress. In economic development (in a developing economy), the role of education becomes very important. Here education becomes both a form of consumption and a kind of investment. As aptly pointed out by John Kenneth Galbraith, "Like bread it is something we use or consume. But like a dam, or canal, it is something in which we invest to produce more in the future. Naturally when we think of education as an investment, it becomes something we should emphasise. There are some economists who are of the view that differences in the rate of growth and underdevelopment also are to be attributed to the different attitudes towards education in the economic development of the country concerned".²

Planning in India:

In India to-day, after the advent of Independence and the formulation of the Five-Year Plans, it has come to be increasingly recognised that, education is an important factor of production, being at the same time an item of consumption as well, of a special nature. In one sense, it is one of the items of consumption which is an economic

2. John Kenneth Galbraith: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE**, Lectures delivered in the summer and autumn of 1961 in five major Indian Educational Communities, p. 36.

and social end in itself—that is to-day, it is one of the important components of living levels.

Until recently, there was a tendency among development planners to emphasise items like capital accumulation, physical resources and population growth, and underestimate technological progress. But now, things have taken a different turn altogether—a swing of the pendulum. The study made by Professor Solow in the United States shows, that taking aggregate non-farm production for the United States between 1900-1960, only 10% of the growth could be accounted for by the first three items—capital accumulation, population growth and new physical resources, leaving the remaining 90% due to residual factors falling under the general heading of technological progress. Professor Solow's and other analysis have conclusively indicated that, the major factor in economic growth is not capital, resources and labour input, but the residual factors, its organization, inventiveness and education; in short, the whole range of man's economic and social skills which do intervene to make physical resources productive.³

In an underdeveloped economy like India, with a pre-dominance of agriculture, no economic development is possible without the development of the agricultural sector. This cannot be done without developing the requisite technical competence in it. It is practically on the capacity of agriculture to meet the increasing demand for food and raw materials that the tempo of development depends. It is obvious, then, that the development of agriculture can help the development of our economy from the 'stagnant to the progressive stage' by increasing the gross national product, by supplying the physical surplus required by other sectors of the economy, in the shape of food and raw materials, and by providing the economic surplus which constitutes the material basis for our economic development. And to help realise this, in the years to come, sufficient emphasis has

3. See H.M. Phillips: 'Economics of Education' in *Indian Journal of Educational Administration and Research*, Summer 1961 issue, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p. 14.

to be placed on *Institutional matters* in agriculture, which do not permit of vertical mobility—such as fragmentation, size and marketing, and other means of increasing agricultural efficiency—especially water supply, seed farms for improved seed, fertilisers and agricultural extension services. The present institutional framework is quite inadequate for an enormous advance in productivity by means of the introduction of improved technology—removal of backwardness of agricultural techniques.

Agriculture, the main prop, is to be made the hard core and solid basis of our economy in the Third Plan. The rapid march towards industrialisation presupposes the modernization, re-organization and re-orientation of the agricultural sector. Agricultural economy should be revolutionised and a new life has to be infused in it. In the West, in countries like United States, United Kingdom, U. S. S. R. and even in Eastern countries like Japan and of late China, agricultural revolutions have greatly and primarily contributed to rapid economic growth.

The Five-Year Plans in the country, together with the Community Development Programmes, are in the nature of an economic revolution. But unfortunately we are putting the cart before the horse. In the Western countries, any economic revolution has been preceded by an education upsurge—a concentrated literacy drive and adult education campaigns. It is now a known fact that, mere accumulation cannot result in physical capital formation, unless it is also combined with technical knowledge. The 'technical progress function' as conceived by Kaldor⁴ is a happy integration of the productivity of capital and the productivity of new technical innovation. Education is the best medium of technical innovation, and this can spread only through an expansion of education. In an underdeveloped country, the increase of agricultural productivity can be brought about only as a result of improving the quality of man,—namely the peasant and his effectiveness in the art of cultivation. Even though literacy in general is expected to exer-

4. N. Kaldor: "A Model for economic growth", *Economic Journal*, December, 1957.

cise a liberalizing influence on the national economy, our immediate concern is more with the rural sector than with the urban or the industrial sector.

Lower productivity of agriculture in India has been explained by experts in Economic growth in terms of stagnation in the rural economy which is perfectly reflected in the stagnation in education among the masses of village people. When analysed, it is obvious that there is a positive correlation between literacy and economic growth—extent of literacy is low in the case of agricultural labourers and poorer economic classes. It is no doubt true, that there has been immense expansion of literacy and higher education in urban areas during recent years. But at the same time, it has to be conceded that, the spread of higher education has had little bearing on the rural economy in particular, because of the lack of agricultural bias, or technological content in education, with special applicability to *farm production*. It is wise to bear in mind, that 'contribution of education to human capital-formation' will depend, to a great extent on its technical content—its suitability for life in the multifarious stages of economic development makes tremendous demands on educational facilities at every level—a whole range of training facilities, is required for artisans, agricultural assistants, teachers, nurses, secretaries, mechanics. And outside the range of these institutions, there is the important field of adult education, extending from 'literacy campaigns or agricultural extension to literary classes'. Above all, crowning the whole system, will be the need for training at the University level in almost every branch of knowledge—all embracing educational training

Agricultural Extension Education :

In the present context of increasing agricultural productivity in our country, should education—agricultural extension education—wait till the spread of literacy? The answer is simple, because, we have now an emergency situation when "mass agricultural education programmes" should prove very effective. It is here, where extension service for the agricultural sector has got very special signifi-

cance. The kind of training programme we should launch, should be based on the clear principle and realization 'that education need not primarily wait upon professionals'. What is now required is not the *dilution* of skills but a *diffusion* of skills amongst the masses—peasants. Therefore, why should the slow penetration and expansion of education in rural areas be an impediment to the spread of effective education of a much more urgent nature which can revolutionise the economic life of rural India?

What is the role of Agricultural Extension Service or Agricultural Education in the present context in India, when the Community Development Programme is already sowing the seeds of an economic revolution in the Indian country-side? Agricultural education very well illustrates several points at which the problem of priority, the role of the partially-trained and the importance of enthusiasm, all converge. As for priority, there is no doubt, however, that expenditure on making available new knowledge to peasant farmers, is probably the most productive investment that can be made in any of the poorer agricultural economies. Agricultural experts assert that, raising the productivity of the soil is, in most places, the surest and quickest and the best way now available for increasing the national income substantially i.e. agricultural yield per acre could be doubled in India, by the application of techniques not-known, the most important sources of gain being better seed selection and control, more use of artificial fertilisers, timely use of pesticides and better conservation and utilisation of water supplies. "Such striking possibilities are not open everywhere, because the gap between what is known to the experts and what is done by the farmers is not everywhere as great as this. In many places however, this is merely because there has been failure to do necessary research on food production".⁵

Agricultural research in India in the past, has been more concerned with commercial crops which were exported to industrial countries, than with food crops, with the

5. W. Arthur Lewis: op. cit., p. 188.

result they have neglected attention to what is produced for home consumption, despite the fact, however, that huge man-power and large acreage have been devoted to food production—four or more times as great as that which is devoted to commercial crops.

The significance of extension service for the agricultural sector lies in its essential function to communicate to the villagers the particular reference to the fields of their activities. What it implies is “carrying to the villagers the knowledge of scientific agriculture and ideas of better living” Research is a pre-requisite to extension. So, wherever, the basic research has yet to be done, there is not yet scope for agricultural extension. However, once the knowledge becomes available, the need for extension workers is really tremendous.

The Five-Year Plans have laid sufficient emphasis on “Rural Extension Service”. At present, in the Community Development programme, the village level worker (VLW) is the chief agent or purveyor of extension service. The VLWs get basic training in agriculture and animal husbandry. In the Third Five-Year Plan, under the programme envisaged for Community Development, there should be eight Extension officials, viz., one each for agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operation, panchayats, rural industrial, rural engineering (overseer), social education and programme for women and children. The C. D. Programme in the Third Five-Year Plan, is based on the firm principle that the “basic problem in the rebuilding of the rural economy is the organisation of the agricultural efforts at the village level. The growth of agricultural production is of such critical importance that the principle test of the C. D. at the present juncture must be its practical effectiveness as an agricultural extension agency”.⁶

In a backward economy like ours, provisions of agricultural services are bound to be a costly affair. But, for

6. Community Development Programme, THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN, 1961 Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, Government of India.

extending agricultural education to the masses of peasants as an emergency measure, we need not be waiting for highly trained professionals. Simple techniques in agricultural extension may be adopted, which could produce quick results also. After all, the extension worker's job is only to 'transmit to the farmers, techniques which have been thoroughly tried elsewhere'.

"He needs to have his wits about him, and to know a good deal about practical agriculture since he will otherwise be ineffective with the farmers. The best training for this is to have worked on a farm himself doing all the farm jobs and then to have spent a year or utmost two, being trained in the new techniques".⁷ After all, the extension officers' main problem is to make contact, it is not just *social contact*, which is rather easy enough in village communities, but that *contact of minds* which would supplement the demonstration farm by persuading a few farmers to try out the innovation themselves in their own holding. It would then become clear to the remainder, that good results have been achieved by farmers just like themselves on holdings just like their own. The success then, is no longer the success of remotely controlled institutions; it is the success of their neighbours and hence it calls for 'gossip, interest, investigation, discussion and emulation'. One of the first tasks of the new extension officer is, now to find out which farmers are most respected in the district and most likely to be imitated, and try to enlist their co-operation in the campaigns he has in mind.

The achievement or success in extension work in a community where the farmers are not used to the idea of technical change, is bound to be very different from a community or an environment where farmers look naturally to the scientist to solve their problems. In advanced countries (England or the United States), the farmers know that the geneticists are breeding better varieties and that the entomologists and the pathologists are producing ways of controlling pests and diseases and that manufacturers of

7 W. Arthur Lewis: op. Cit, p. 189.

machinery are constantly introducing improved equipment. They are indeed very keen to hear about these things and so they subscribe to farm journals, they listen to radio programmes for farmers and they attend meetings of farmers' clubs. It is in such ways some new ideas are disseminated rapidly⁷.

On the other hand, the extension problem in backward communities (India) is, to create a similar atmosphere, in which the farmers would be educated to look upon the agricultural officers as an essential part of the agricultural community, existing in order to make life easier for the farmer. Experts would say that, part of the secret of this consists in getting the farmers round to form agricultural societies, for discussion, for visiting each other's farm and for demonstration. The other part however consists in "really having something to offer, i.e. if the extension officer succeeds in solving some problems which have worried the farmers—some disease for example—he will gain their confidence whereas, if nothing comes from taking his advice, the farmers may not take him seriously".

Perhaps, the background to farmers' enthusiasm for new techniques is sometimes political—it is difficult to work up enthusiasm in the farmers who have been exploited for generations by landlords, money lenders and traders, especially if they happen to suspect that the main result may be only to increase the share of the oppressors. Hence, land reforms, more often than not, becomes a necessary prelude to "successful agricultural extension." As W. Arthur Lewis, particularly observes :⁸

"If the country's political leaders begin to take real interest in the farmers' problem, which most often they do not, and show by their deeds as well as their words, that they are out to help the farmers, then, the farmers are likely to respond. Agricultural extension, without the political changes and political enthusiasm which it requires, may just fall flat".

⁸ W. Arthur Lewis; op. Cit., p. 190.

India might do well to emulate the example of China, in the matter of running a "large general purpose extension agency" at a much smaller cost to the State than we have been able to do in the past. "In China, the workers at the village level are the members of the community party who are not themselves technical experts, but yet they develop their full energy in enthusing the farmers to use improved methods and transmitting the information about improved techniques from scientists of higher levels to actual tillers of the soil". This entire scheme is not costly in China, because the general purpose village level workers (equivalent to our VLW) who exceed several millions, do not have to be paid by the state. On the other hand, these people work in the village itself, and are generally paid on the co-operative farms on the basis of working points.

Besides the above, in China there is a specialised technical organization in the rural areas, called "Agricultural Technique Popularization Stations", which are run by the provincial departments of agriculture. Some of the important functions of these Stations may be spotlighted here, such as:

"Popularization of scientific knowledge regarding agriculture, e.g. use of fertilisers, growing of field and vegetable crops, methods of controlling diseases, insects and pests, improvement in the method of cultivation and management of land, etc., summing up the experience of advanced farmers and extending this advanced experience to other areas."⁹

Suggestions :

Certain practical suggestions may be worth consideration in the hands of the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation of the country. At present,

9. Report of the Indian Delegation to China on Agricultural Planning and Techniques. Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India, 1957, p. 141.

we are having in the country a huge network of social education institutions under the Community Development Programme, viz., Community Centres, Women's Organizations and Youth clubs. With the help and co-operation of the village level workers and several extension officers under the Block Development Officer, in each block, it should be possible to have an integrated programme of "Mass education" in agricultural extension, acting on the principle of "each one teach one"—that each person who learns should teach, and new techniques may be worked out for mass literacy campaigns, which do indeed make it possible for a relatively small number of trained teachers to achieve astonishing results, on the basis of students passing on their knowledge. In the words of W Arthur Lewis ¹⁰

"The secret of success in any adult education campaign whether in literacy, in agriculture, in child care or in Chinese literature, is to win the enthusiasm of the students, who not only give their time and their minds to the subject, but also infect others with their enthusiasm and pass their knowledge on. This enthusiasm is all the more likely, when the programme takes the student into itself to the extent of giving him also a missionary role, than it is in the programmes where there is a professional barrier between student and teacher".

So long as 'Extension Service' is confined to mere preachings of certain pet or set ideas and formulas, it is not going to be a living force or organism—not deriving its nourishment from the nutrient of field investigations into farm-practices conducted at local levels, quite in keeping with the limited local resources at the disposal of the average farmer. Experiments conducted outside, those attached to higher educational institutions may not carry conviction with the villagers. Apart from these, there is need for a fundamental recognition of a "two way traffic between research specialists at the one end of the scale and the cultivators at the other end, with the extension staff in the middle acting as co-ordinating agents of an effective nature". Research, in

10. W. Arthur Lewis: op. Cit. p. 187.

the true sense of the term, should provide extension and fertilizer research. Rightly has the second Indo-American Team on *Agricultural Education, Research and Extension* stressed the importance of integration of education, extension and research. To quote the team report¹¹

“Research specialists, extension staff and cultivators, constitute a team which ideally perpetuate a cycle of information. Research findings transposed into recommendations should pass from the cultivators through extension workers to research specialists”.

It has to be remembered, that economic growth always involves change on a wide front, rather requires a great number of changes, especially if it is a question of introduction of new techniques in a “closed community”. The changes may be required not only in the economic and social structure, but also in the provision of capital and the acquisition of new skills. In an underdeveloped economy, the rural sector should undergo far more changes than the urban sector.

When all is said and done, agricultural extension must be seen as one part in a wider programme of agricultural improvement, which includes such other things as roads, agricultural credit, water supplies, efficient marketing, land reform, development of new industries to absorb surplus labour, co-operatives and so on. If rapid progress is to be the goal in the field of agricultural extension service, new techniques can be worked out for learning the essentials of a job in a shorter time than had hitherto been the case. Was it not a fact that during the second world war, when speed was the essence of success, new techniques happened to be evolved for giving rapid training, with perhaps the most astonishing results? Therefore, even now, could not those methods play a major role in places where a shortage of skills is holding up economic development? Will the Government of India think along such realistic lines?

11. Report of the second Indo-American Team on Agricultural Education, Research and Extension, 1960, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi.

CHAPTER XIV

ROLE OF YOUTH MOVEMENTS, GUIDING YOUTHS INTO MATURITY

“Students’ indiscipline” is something common everywhere in the world. It is a subject of wide debate in the columns of many Indian newspapers. Of course, the problem requires to be viewed with serious concern; while so doing it is better to bear in mind that the problem is not an Indian problem alone. One can look for the common characteristics that make youths a problem, be it in Manchester or Moscow, in Calcutta or Chicago, in town or in country.

Indiscipline among students as well as workers is, no doubt a menace to society. If it is among workers, it has repercussions on the economy of the country, since it affects not only the efficiency of production, but also the morale of the nation. Similarly, indiscipline among students (may be half educated) is equally a great problem, having as serious repercussions, as the other

Generally, student-indiscipline is characterised by insubordination to their higher authorities, resulting in abstaining from their regular classes, revolting against the rules and regulations set in a conventional manner, and boycotting others from attending classes. Sometimes, violent behaviours are also noticed, whenever, resistance is offered by higher authorities to the students’ way of doing things.

*When analysed, one finds that the effect is not without a cause. Too often, such violent forms of behaviour among students may be a result of ‘emotional disintegration’. This may be due to several factors, such as emotional imbalance and environmental forces as influenced by social, political and economic factors.

These days, the problem has given room for much anxiety, not only to educational authorities, but also to governments as well. The magnitude of the problem is rather intensified, when the educational authorities find it difficult to tackle

it themselves. When the problem comes to the eyes of the government authorities, naturally heated discussions are held regarding the best measures to arrest the growth of this kind of disease which is more a human problem, and less a physical one.

Whatever may be the cause, student indiscipline is more or less a by-product of rapid social change, accelerated by urbanisation. In as much as this is true, the entire blame for juvenile 'unruliness' should not be laid upon the youths that need disciplining. To some extent, society itself needs disciplining.

In this context, several measures have been, and are being suggested to tackle this problem both by the administrators and educationists. It is a known fact that, none of the suggested measures have been as effective as contemplated. What then is the alternative?

Taking a closer look at the troublesome creatures,—the youths, one finds that youths have energy to burn, which cannot be extinguished. Further, adolescence is a period of revolt—revolt set against regulations laid down by parents and society, of which the schools and colleges are better controlled than others. Also associated with this kind of revolt, is to be found, a freshness of outlook, characterised by a purity of hope and buoyancy that makes youths rather impatient and frustrated with the imperfect world and the ways of their elders.

We in India would do well to look at some of the organisations in other countries, which seek to direct their youths along right paths, towards good citizenship. There are a number of forces that guide and discipline youths, and many more that seek to teach youths to discipline themselves, in order to be responsible members of the human community.

In this connection, it is worth mentioning about the 'Youth Movements' that have been popular in Germany, Russia, America and China. They represent a conscious revolt of the younger generations and serve as a means whereby, youths may proclaim their own ideas, values and standards. And basic to it, are their dissatisfaction with the existing intellectual, moral, social or political order and

a confidence in the power of youths. They are a striking phenomenon of the 20th century.

These movements are based on sound psychological grounds. Modern psychologists no longer consider childhood and the early adolescence merely preliminary to adulthood, without value in themselves, but 'important stages in life'.

Even though the form that youth movement takes may be different in each country, certain common elements may be noticed in it. There is a consciousness that in a given tradition, political or economic situation, youths had limited possibilities of expansion and adjustment. They were often representative of the rising generation of classes, which were not accorded a part in the political, economic or social activity of the country. They were animated by far-reaching missionary ideals—the rise of a new type of man, community or nation better than before. To quote an instance, the recent outburst in Japan against the U.S.—Japanese Military Pact during the regime of Ex-premier Kishi, stands testimony to it.

Youth movements are generally the symptoms of a break in the internal order of a nation, of a much quickened pace of change, or of the lack of integration of civilization with the existing social structure. The growing instability and insecurity of political and social conditions are reflected in the increasing vigour of youth movements.

So long as national and social movements of any country continue in their violence and intransigence, youth movements will maintain their influence and strength. But in this connection, student unrest and their other kinds of emotional outbursts can be checked and controlled to some extent, provided, they are properly re-directed along useful channels of public activity. What is required, is, a growing awareness of the magnitude of the problem, the changing needs of society and new kinds of discipline for redirecting the energy of the youth along proper lines.

Here, a shift in the emphasis from values purely individual to those of the class, the corporate body and the nation and ultimately the world, may be desirable. Various

organised efforts to provide direction for the energies of youth on national and international levels are worth serious consideration. To mention a few : the boy scouts and girl guides movements, the youth hostels movements etc. which are international in their outlook.

'The Youth Hostels Movement' is not so popular in India as in Western countries. If the Government of India could allot sufficient funds and encourage various State Governments to start such youth hostels, this might give a great fillip to this movement, and act as a great check to the growing fissiparous tendency of the unruly youths of the country.

The Community Development and the National Extension Service programmes are by themselves great movements directed to canalise the energies of the masses along socially useful channels. In this connection, the 'Labour Camps' sponsored by the Ministry of Community Development, Government of India, are worth mentioning as a bold step in the right direction. Under this scheme, a number of such camps are organised and conducted in the various blocks, periodically, for which, the services of the youths of particular age groups are enlisted. Such camps are generally conducted during vacations so that the services of as many youths in schools and colleges as possible could be mobilised.

Besides, the A. C. C. and the N. C. C. are also such movements closely connected with youths and their activities, though the kind of training given by them is military in character. This does not mean, that it precludes one from being fit for civilian life. Camps are being organised regularly which give training in self-discipline and responsibility.

The Bharat Sevak Samaj has been undertaking the responsibility of organising similar camps for youths since it is essentially a youth movement. One of its special characteristics has been that it entertains only those youths who are devoted to service. This organization is receiving financial assistance from the Central Social Welfare Board, a welfare wing of the Government of India.

.The latest move by the Government of India to make social service camps compulsory for students, prior to their graduation, is a laudable step towards conserving youth energies for national reconstruction. The Government of India have been taking direct interest in the welfare of the youths by creating a 'special wing for youth welfare' as an important adjunct of the Ministry of Education. This is a novel feature of Independent India. This youth welfare unit is held responsible for sponsoring and organising such activities, as will encourage and improve the physical well-being of youths in colleges and universities. Youth camps, are regularly organized and conducted on an All-India basis during vacations for periods not less than a fortnight.

For the Youth Camps of the kind, organised by the Youth Welfare Unit of the Ministry of Education, only teachers holding responsible position in Colleges and Universities are being selected and they in turn, when they go back, are expected to train other members of the staff and students, by organising similar camps within their own institutions.

Such training in leadership, both for teachers and students, is bound to pay rich dividends to the country in the form of turning out more and more useful and responsible citizenry, without which democracy will prove a colossal failure.

Therefore, any movement sponsored either by private or State bodies, provided *it keeps the youths on the move for right things, along right directions*, is an asset to the nation, especially when there are forces challenging the utility and effectiveness of the conventional institutional set-up.

If yet, despite all such efforts, we have problem youths, let us not stop our efforts. *In a world of shifting patterns, where old conformities are being stretched and snapped by expanding horizons, let us try to patch together the moral code of the youths, by a process of trial and error. Let us admit that it is natural for youth to focus its perspectives and seek out permanent values.*

While it is admittedly certain, that the possibility of guiding all youths of the country, into perfect maturity cannot be vouchsafed by any genius, let us admit that the adults of the nation have an inherent obligation to provide constructive social channels for the exuberant energies of the youths. To the extent, the newly turned youths of such youth movements accept a code of positive social and moral action, the total efforts on the part of the Government, and educational authorities of this country as well as the various private bodies, could be well justified.

CHAPTER XV

ROLE OF ACTIVITIES AND THEIR PLACE IN EDUCATION

New Approach in Education :—It is widely agreed that the purpose of education is that pupils shall be trained not only to know the right things but also to behave in the right way. A close relationship between right knowledge and right action is sought for. It is one thing to know what one should do and quite another thing to do it. No one will disagree with the fact that an education which gives information as to right action, but fails to inspire the pupils with a longing to do it, is failing in its object.

The difference between the old and new approaches may become clearer by just comparing the old educational system with that of the present. The old educational system may be characterised as something purposeless and meaningless, leaving no permanent impression. The great drawback of Indian Education in India under British rule was that it was too exclusively literary. In the old educational system the accurate memorization of facts was all important. The facts and information taught and memorised were limited to what were found in the text-books. If the text-books were thoroughly known, the examinations could be easily passed.

According to the new approach, life itself is education. The aim of education is to help pupils understand the world in which they have to live, and how it came to be, so that they may become responsible citizens. In the new approach an attempt is made to promote critical thinking, encourage a readiness for social change and create a disposition for acting on behalf of the general welfare. The great difference between the old and the new approach is that in the latter the learning of facts is not an end in itself, nor is it done something purely for the sake of examinations, but it is important only so far as it serves the ends of education.

The learning of facts is a means rather than an end. The facts to be learned are selected according as they serve these ends.

Value of Activities:

“Social activities represent both a method of gaining knowledge and also an opportunity for learning social skills, co-operation, tolerance, sympathy, responsibility, honesty, independence self-reliance, constructive criticism”. In the traditional schools, although pupils were taught in large groups, learning was an individual affair. Little or no provision was made for pupils to learn from each other, to work together to achieve something or to co-operate in solving some problem. Of course there were a few intelligent teachers here and there who used to encourage the social virtues. But it will be widely agreed that in the set-up of the traditional school the virtues of social participation were ignored.

What is the principle behind the Activity School? It puts its faith more upon doing than upon knowing on the part of the pupil. The principle and the importance of the Activity Method is well summed up by one great American educationist: “Education is life and social activities must train the pupils in the art of living through concrete and definite experiences* acquired in living in a school community, which reflects all the problems of the larger Civic community into which the future citizens must play an active part”.¹ Experience and participation are the two watch-words of the Activity school, inculcating habits and attitudes that will help the pupils in responding to situations outside the school and in their later life. In the words of the Secondary Education Commission Report “Activities promote the formation of character and inculcate ideals for personal integrity and social efficiency”.

How can the Social Activities approach, satisfy the psychological needs mentioned above? In the first place if

1. John Dewey: *Democracy and Education*, Macmillan, 1916

the pupils in a class are divided into small groups, and assigned certain specific functions to be discharged by each group, with a leader of their own choice, here certain advantages accrue. Every pupil feels that he has a place and is wanted. A growing sense, belonging to a particular group, place, and community arises, and this feeling is likely to lead to an appreciation of the inter-relatedness of the elements of the environment. Working in small groups will give for more pupils the chance of leadership and responsibility. The individual is not overlooked as he may be in a large class—the pupil instead of being a mere passive listener becomes an intelligent participant in the active process of learning.

If pupils are allowed responsibility for their learning, and given freedom in the way they express what they have learnt, they produce better results by way of social education. It is now realized that education is a social affair, and that educational science is first of all a social science, and that the educational institution is a social institution, and community centre. Effective learning can take place through a process of unconscious assimilation, provided the school environment is rich. How can the school environment be enriched? This is a task to be set to the management, teachers and pupils as well. In enriching the school environment, the pupil can be given a share by setting them certain social tasks, such as keeping the surroundings clean, maintaining a good garden, arranging the Assembly Hall, —decorating the school on festive occasions, maintaining news boards etc. Such activities will rub off their shyness and their angular and highbrow attitudes to life, and thus lead to the enrichment and sublimation of the school life.

Limitation of Activities:

It is no doubt true that the traditional system of education produced only lop-sided men and women and not all-rounded personalities, and therefore to cure that evil, a new remedy is necessary by way of a new approach to education. The new approach that is suggested by educational

psychologists and progressive educationists is the "Activity Method".

Social Education is a many-sided endeavour since its aim is primarily to develop a live sense of social unity and a keen consciousness not only of the privileges but all of the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic, secular state like India. Such a scheme of Social Education is supposed to be achieved, according to its sponsors by making the school "a centre of meaningful and purposeful activities"—the school a miniature society.

While making activities a dominant feature in the new scheme of things, a fatal mistake is committed. All psychologists agree that learning is an activity and that it is a continuous process. In the continuous process of learning, many activities are involved such as reading, writing, reasoning, thinking, feeling etc. All these processes cannot be ignored in the act of learning. According to psychologists, learning involves the three aspects of 'Knowing, feeling and willing'. Any act of learning involves a combination of all these *e.g.* while reading a few lines in a book, the eye muscles have to be exercised, the hands to be used, the body must be erect, the mind must think and interpret the symbols or mere words in the book, into ideas and understand them and express them in words, if speech be necessary. If the lines read, happen to be a piece of poetry, the question of feeling happiness or enjoyment arises. Such a feeling of happiness is a mental and emotional state, and this cannot be dispensed with as no part of activity at all.

Modern psychologists hold the view that even thinking is 'sub-vocal speech'. If that be true, in any kind of a learning process, the knowing and feeling aspects cannot be ignored. In the new approach, the willing or doing aspect is over-emphasised which was totally neglected in the traditional system of education, and the other two equally important aspects of knowing and feeling are now completely ignored which were unfortunately over-emphasised in the old scheme.

Social education is a many sided endeavour. A 'Social Activities Programme' should offer an opportunity for every

pupil to learn and make his contribution. Such a programme must necessarily be flexible, admitting of a wide variety for choice of activities. In the absence of such a flexible programme, where learning is "social Learning" the lazy pupils are likely to leave their work to the active pupils.

Activities should not be the province of any particular subject teacher, nor associated with any special period in the time-table. There is always a danger that some pupils may think of them as a separate subject, rather than as an approach. They are as much the business of the Mathematics teacher, as the English teacher, of the teacher of the regional language as of the Social studies, of the Craft teacher, as of the Science teacher. The knowledge that pupils gain by working on a social 'Activities-Centred Curriculum' may be part of any of the traditional subjects. What the pupils gain in personality development is the responsibility of every teacher. Therefore learning through correlated activities must be attempted in every subject as far as possible.

There is another defect that arises out of over-emphasis on activity. It is true that activity has an irresistible appeal to the mind of every normal pupil, but that appeal to activity may not last throughout the period of the pupil's education. Activities may appeal more, during the early stages of the pupil's life, that is to say, during the high school period. Therefore, during the high school period of the pupil's education, there may be a need for a change in the emphasis from mere activity to intellectual types of work like, wide reading on abstract subjects, development of imagination, training and control of emotions, concept formation, etc. As the pupils advance in age, the romantic appeal fades away and therefore the need for a change in emphasis will arise.

A shift in the emphasis from mere verbalism and memorization of facts to learning by doing, is no doubt a welcome change but it is not enough if the emphasis stops with a mere activity. Great care has to be exercised in seeing to it that the activities in which the pupils participate, produce

the desirable results—training in self-governing, development of qualities of tolerance, sympathy, co-operation etc.

In over-emphasising activities, another mistake is also committed. That is to say, whether all learning could be possible through correlated activities is a question on which the opinions of educationists differ. Correlation may not be possible in all subjects. All that can be possible is to try to attempt correlation as far as possible in each subject. By way of caution it may be always better to bear in mind the psychological truth that, 'Activity is after all, a tool or an instrument of learning; that is to say, *one of the most effective methods of learning and not the only method of learning*'.

CHAPTER XVI

RURAL INSTITUTES IN INDIA: OR COLLEGES OF RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION

The chain of rural institutes, which has been recently set up, is born of a new zeal for betterment generated in rural areas, needing a new type of a community worker. Neither the expansion of traditional education, nor the basic schools would possibly do full justice to this idea. Hence, a new dimension had to be given to higher education, with due accent on the practical application of knowledge to the varieties of Indian rural life, the Rural Institutes.

The sponsors of the Rural Institutes,—‘a new experiment in Rural Higher Education’—must have had their inspiration from the “Danish Folk School Movement” and the “American Land Grant College Programme”. These Rural Institutes are off-shoots, crystallized primarily out of the early experience of rural education movement in India and, in a large measure, do exemplify in their fundamentals the ideas of prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore who were the precursors of this movement.

Almost all the Rural Institutes functioning to-day in India, are associated with well-recognised and popular organizations already active in rural education, and village services. In their workings, the over-all policy is framed, and work programme is guided by a high level National Council for Rural Higher Education with the Union Education Minister himself as the Chairman and other public members to steer through the policy of the Council. Though some of the universities which are traditional and conservative, do hesitate to recognise these Rural Institute Graduates, due importance, is, however, being given at present to them, and they have been recognised by some ten State Governments and the Centre. It may be gratifying to note

that the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation have recently in their circular made a ruling that, as far as possible, preference will be given to the Diploma holders of the Rural Institutes for certain specified categories of job placements. This is, indeed, a gesture of a welcome change in the attitude of the Government of the country to encourage the absorption of such trainees who may be better fitted for several jobs in the Community Development Programmes requiring qualities of leadership and initiative.

When all is said and done about the Rural Institutes, a word of caution may be uttered in this connection. To quote Louis Smith:

“This is against a possible tendency to develop the programme too much in terms of the professional competence demanded of institute graduates. In some institutes there already appeared to be a tendency to think along ultra-utilitarian lines. There must be a broader approach to programme planning”.¹ Louis Smith further observes : “Other life roles of the student must be considered. He is not merely a professional worker, but he is also a citizen, a member of a family, a person with needs for self-understanding, an inhabitant of a larger world than village India, and a person of spirit and imagination. These dimensions of life need recognition in planning the educational programmes of the institutes. Among the areas needing more stress, are the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities”.²

The observations of Louis Smith, the learned author of the Report on ‘Rural Higher Education in India’, and an expert in the field of Rural Higher Education in the United States, are pertinent in this connection, having a special bearing on the successful functioning of the Rural Institutes in India in the future. Perhaps this might somewhat disturb the complacency of the sponsors of the new schemes, but it need not. The author feels that the word of caution

1. Louis Smith—The Rural Institutes of Higher Education, a Study with a recommendation.

2. *Ibid.*

uttered by Louis Smith needs a careful consideration at the hands of the National Council for Rural Higher Education and others who are practically running the Rural Institutes. This points out the need for 're-thinking and re-organisation of the syllabi and other aspects of the curriculum in the Rural Institutes along realistic lines, with a view to updating them with the march of time, so that the Rural Institutes may not lag far behind other higher institutions of collegiate studies'. This, as a consequence, would necessitate a 'thorough overhauling of the present syllabi, integrating it by infusing a little more of an element of science with humanities, to make it well-balanced'. Of course, no study of the various aspects of Rural Higher Education will be complete unless an attempt is made to define clearly the aims and objectives of the extension work in the Rural Institutes. It is here, one may opine, that the way in which extension work is being now put in action needs, thoughtful and careful probe.

The Joint Indo-American Team on Agricultural Research and Education (1955) which was appointed soon after the Higher Rural Education Committee reported, happened to review the position afresh. In fact, they took the view that "rural institutes were a half-way house between the Rural Universities envisaged in the University Education Commission Report and the Manjari type of vocational schools". In the opinion of the Team, the two basic types of institutions which should be established all over the country are "the Vocational Schools and the Rural Universities". According to the Team, each district should have a school of the Manjari type and each State should have a Rural University.

The Committee on Rural Higher Education which again went into the question, in its Report (1958) seems to have endorsed the same line of thinking as that of the Indo-American Team. This Committee appears to have reviewed the Rural Institutes, the Manjari type of schools, the Basic Agricultural Schools, and Janata colleges. It is worth noting that, the Committee had made certain recommendations of a far-reaching nature, regarding the reorganization of rural education, with a view to developing a

new system of education in the rural areas in which the *farmers' requirements* would figure more prominently than has been the case so far.

Further, this Committee has also endorsed the view of the Joint Indo-American Team that "rural institutes will have ultimately to be developed into rural universities of the type envisaged by the University Education Commission" This hope is now further strengthened by the Report of the minutes of the 9th meeting of the National Council for Rural Higher Education, held at New Delhi on the 2nd November, 1961. To quote the report :

"Some day, sooner or later, these institutes will develop into universities". Herein lies the hope of educational progress of future India,—education for rural India—certainly a forward look!

CHAPTER XVII

SOCIAL EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Before analysing the role of social education, it is better we know something about education in general. What is education? Education means "a teaching-learning process ; it is a life-long and continuous process. It does not end with graduation. As Dr. S. Radharkrishnan puts it : "Graduation is only a milestone in life's journey". True education results in the socialisation of a person and that being the case, socialisation is also a process which "begins with the cradle and ends with the grave", as Gandhiji would put it. Education as an institution consists of the programme of formal educational organisations of the society and the effects of these on the persons influenced by the organization. The formal institutions responsible for such a kind of education are schools—nurseries, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities.

Apart from the above formal educational institutions, there are now-a-days a host of informal educational agencies. They may as well be called "outside school agencies". They are of a wide variety, such as, the mass media of communication comprising: the movies, radio, television, newspapers, speeches, books, magazines, informal associations with others etc.

What are the functions of education? In a broad sense, education as a process is synonymous with the socialisation of the person. Further, it is generally formal and institutional. Wherever there is learning, whenever there is modification of behaviour, there are teaching-learning process in operation. From cradle to grave, education is occurring. Every group with which one is in contact is an educational influence, although, of course, there are great differences between groups as educational agencies. It has to be recognised that, aside from the school system, and quite as important as the

school systems, are the family, the playgroup magazines, newspapers, books, religious institutions, radio and other communication media.

Now-a-days, everyone is attaching much more importance to informal education than formal education, as in the past. Why? It is due to the fact that, we are living in a democratic political set-up, wherein the goal is, the establishment of the socialistic pattern of society. Naturally, every democratic society aims at "democratisation of education". This means, throwing open the doors of knowledge to all. Education, thus, becomes universal and not a privilege of the few.

It is now widely realised that, education is largely a social affair, and that the educational institution is primarily a social institution and a community centre. True learning to be effective, can, should provide a rich educational atmosphere. This is a task to be set to the management, educators and educands as well. In enriching the educational atmosphere the educands may be given a central share of responsibility in the social tasks set to them; keeping the surroundings clean, raising and upkeep of a good garden, decorating the assembly hall on festive occasions, maintaining news-boards, etc. Such activities will not only enrich their personal lives but ultimately lead to the enrichment of the life around. The only way of changing the psychology and social and personal habits of the pupils, and to prepare them for the new task of democracy and freedom, is to educate them. All talk of social welfare and cultural progress is an optical illusion without a persistent and unrelenting literacy drive. "Social education to-day has to become an instrument of change", as Sardar K. M. Panikar would put it. To serve a changing society it has to popularise new ideas, teach new values, familiarise people with new social relationships, introduce new techniques and provide for the transmission of the basic concept of our new civilization. In fact, it has to be an instrument for creating and continuing our new life.

The purpose of social education should be to 'provide everyone with facilities to continue his mental development,

to enable people to adjust themselves to changing conditions and to develop an awareness of new problems". Social education is a many-sided endeavour, since its aim is primarily to develop a live sense of social unity and a keen consciousness, not only of the privileges but also of the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic secular state like India. Such a scheme of social education is supposed to be achieved, according to its sponsors, by making the place of learning a centre of meaningful and purposeful activities, —the place of learning a miniature society. A 'social activity programme should be rich enough in content and offer infinite opportunities for every one to learn and make his striking contribution. Such a programme must necessarily permit flexibility admitting as wide a variety of choice of activities as possible. In order to obtain the best results of 'social education activities, it must be connected with the life and labour of the people. Labour itself educates a man and if reduced labour is so organised as to give it a social purpose, automatically it will provide a higher social education.

Social education, to be successful, should combine two aspects—namely, adult and fundamental education. The teaching of adults to read and write, emphasises functional literacy, which should enable the students to read and appreciate simple messages, write notes, and short letters and understand ordinary instruments of business and communication. Following such a foundation, 'education for citizenship, is to be carried on in adult education classes and community assemblies. In this connection, the audio-visual media open up immense possibilities of effective presentation of the programme. What is needed to-day in India, with a high rate of illiteracy, is a concerted drive of expansion of "community-school programmes and more intensive and systematic school-public-relations".

In order that as many people as possible may benefit from the scheme a certain amount of education of the less well-informed adults may be necessary. It must be remembered, that life-long learning is a necessity. The following are some of the reasons, why, we must keep learning as long as we live:

- (a) We are living in a world, where changes are taking place very rapidly. These changes are very striking : (1) In the conduct of family life (2) In technological and scientific advance (3) In economic conditions and (4) In educational and social welfare. Hence, we need to up-to-date our ideas, opinions, and behaviour with these changes in order to be at home in our modern world.
- (b) Every day, there is a constantly increasing store of knowledge, which results in the rapid out-dating of much that we learn in school.
- (c) In our day-to-day activities we find further learning necessary and desirable, to improve our official life, or personal life or life as a citizen—all the three, perhaps.
- (d) We live in a democratic Government in which, public institutions must be adopted to the needs and desires of the public. It is important, therefore, that the public itself undergo modifications by continuous learning.
- (e) Has it not been reported that millions of us stop reading to learn , soon after either leaving the Primary or Secondary Schools at the age of 11 and 15? To cease learning at the age of 11 and 15 is to cease living at 11 or 15. It is nothing short of intellectual death.
- (f) Is it not true that, in proportion as we continue learning, our personality is assured of perfect growth consistent with and adjusted to environmental changes.
- (g) Alert people do not normally tend to adapt passively to their environment; but through their effort and ingenuity as a result of continuous learning, they manipulate their environment, re-creating the world in every succeeding generation.
- (h) Illiteracy is a sign of backwardness and unfitness for civilized government; it is a curse that brings in its train bigotry and superstition and corruption.

Therefore, adult education is a pressing need of the hour. Because of lack of educational opportunities and dearth of suitable reading materials for them, many of the 'drop outs' have stopped reading to learn soon after leaving school at the primary stage. Hence, they do not understand the meaning of citizenry in a democracy, especially when Panchayatraj or decentralised administration is going to be the rule of the day, and as a consequence thereof, they are not functionally literate by any 'real standard'. Therefore, only through fundamental and adult education can we hope to improve such a situation in our country.

What shall be the objectives of adult education in India? The immediate objective of the adult education programme is, the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of better ways of living for those of the population who have not yet received the benefits of an education. And the broader, long range objective is the improvement of community life in all its aspects, through the provision of vocational, recreational, social and other educational opportunities for adults to make of themselves more efficient citizens. Adult education in India, should, therefore, aim to accomplish the following general objectives :

- (a) To develop functional literacy-ability to read and write with understanding ordinary letters and printed matter;
- b) To emphasise moral character and social discipline as requisites for citizenship under the Indian Republic;
- (c) To teach productive and useful occupational pursuits;
- (d) To impart health knowledge and teach health practices, necessary for comfortable and healthy living;
- (e) To promote desirable standards of home and community life; and,
- (f) To teach the use of leisure in worthwhile recreational activities.

CHAPTER XVIII

A SEARCH LIGHT

Obviously, the greatest drawback to the country's rehabilitation and development, especially of the rural communities, is the existence of a sizable portion of its citizenry, that is either without the benefit of fundamental education or devoid entirely of education in any form. This problem has long been recognized, but the measures so far taken for its solution have proved inadequate and wanting in incentives and proper direction.

Out of this situation is born the desire to provide a fresh approach to the problem. It is felt that intensified efforts to liquidate illiteracy in this country as well as to equip those who have but scant education, with the fundamental tools of learning, to render them efficient and useful citizens of a democratic society, can succeed, only if such efforts are adequately and vigorously guided. There is thus, the need for intelligent, purposeful and progressive leadership.

During the British rule, the masses were neglected and, therefore, Government provided education only for a select few—the gifted, the intellectual elite. The charges against the educational system introduced by the British are many; some tenable, though others are unreasonable. Among the proven major complaints is the one about the unreality of the whole system. The system was not rooted in the soil; so all the learning from the West has remained theoretical in most cases. It failed to prepare Indian youths for the practical uses to which knowledge can be put. Practically speaking, the Government system had been operating on such a limited scale, that even after 200 years, only 14% of the Indian population could read and write under the British rule and even primary education was neither compulsory nor free.

A few persons were daring enough to start their own experiments in education, which attempted to revolutionise the existing system of education, thereby breaking new

grounds and opening new vistas. At the beginning of this century, there dawned in India an era of national education, the new trend beginning with the growth of the early Home Rule Movement. Then a few Gurukulas were started at Hardwar and other places, striving to relate modern learning with ancient Hindu heritage. Later, came Rabindranath Tagore's educational experiments in education—for the first time a bold venture by an Indian, who strove to revitalise the denationalized youths of India. It was his Institute of Rural Reconstruction (or Siksha Sastra), and the Rural Farm which credited the many-sided genius with enduring fame as an educationist of a great order, who was responsible for restoring the lost equilibrium in the sphere of educational reconstruction. What is appreciable in Tagore, is, the spirit with which he undertook, 'a free wedlock with modern science and Western thought'. Unfortunately similar experiments were never attempted by others in any other part of the country, and it was just like a 'lonely pilgrim on the path of educational reconstruction'. Tagore's experiments were rather limited in their scope, though not in their approach, and hence there was no such thing as the real 'nation-wide revival' of his scheme of rural education or rural reconstruction.

In the true sense of the term, the real nation-wide revival came only with the Gandhi Movement, which founded Vidyapiths in such strategic places as Ahmedabad, Bombay, Wardha and Banaras, even though the precursor in this regard was Rabindranath Tagore.

The Gandhi trend came into its own in 1937, when a large part of India was governed by the Nationalist party which had acquired power under the new Constitution. Mention may be made of the All-India Educational Conference convened at Wardha that year. Gandhiji presided over this Body, and it was at that meeting that the programme variously known as 'Basic National Education' or "Rural National Education through village handicrafts" or "Wardha Scheme of Education" was adopted. It proclaimed among other things that :

1. The Government should provide free and compulsory education for seven years on a nation-wide scale.

2. The medium of instruction should henceforth be the mother-tongue and not the foreign English language.

3. The foundation principle of this course should be that of Gandhi that "the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work, and that all the other abilities to be developed and training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child".

4. The question of remuneration of the teachers is bound to be met gradually by this type of semi self-supporting educational system.

What are the advantages of the 'Gandhian system of education'? The British provided education to those who could afford it. Now Gandhiji's planning to provide education to even those who could not afford it was a trend in the direction of democracy—democratising education. 'The Gandhian system' rejected the qualification of class, skill and money. It guaranteed certain basic training to all, and forced it even on the unwilling. What was perhaps wrong with Gandhiji was his peasant's diffidence towards urbanity and his unconcernedness with the superstructure of any educational system. All that he wanted was to meet the basic needs of the rural community in India.

LIMITATIONS OF THE GANDHIAN SYSTEM:

This system tried to concentrate only on a hamlet child of 7, and provided a programme of education which would train him till he attained 14 years. Although it would influence the future millions of boys and girls, the programme was limited in its scope. The result was, that, it also became limited in outlook. It failed to bring out an educational programme, worthwhile and applicable to higher education, which at the same time could adequately meet the urban needs. Naturally, there were critics who levelled charges against this system, and they stated openly, that under this

system, children would be exploited, instead of being educated. Another charge against the Gandhian scheme of education is, that he sets down a theory of basic education, which tends to get away from the humane to the materialistic, from the permanently rational to the temporarily expedient. The Basic scheme fails, when we go to extremes (as is being done to-day in most of the basic schools) of intensifying vocational training. Another criticism of Gandhiji's Wardha Scheme is, that it would not produce experts or specialists which the country may need at present in large numbers.

The literacy campaign outlined in the Scheme of the Central Advisory Board of Education of the Government of India was no doubt daring, where the Wardha Plan was timid. The educators invited by the Government worked for five years from 1938 to 1944, and they had the full co-operation of the delegates sent by Gandhiji. Consequently, their proposals retained certain aspects of the training as advocated by the Mahatma. But fortunately the Government plan had freed itself of the 'straight jacket' of this Wardha Scheme—its self-supporting plan. The problem is really so tremendous, that any plan of rapidly educating India's teeming millions, will have to be tackled on a mammoth scale.

Now, the declaration of Indian Independence on August 15, 1947 makes a landmark in the history of Indian education, apart from its administration. The adoption of the Indian Constitution is a bold step forward in the right direction of change and particularly mentionable is Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, which is the fountainhead of far-reaching consequences in the sphere of education in India for the masses. It ensures "Universal, free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years". The framers of the Indian Constitution envisaged, that the task would be accomplished within ten years of the adoption of the Constitution. Though the results are far from satisfactory, the ideal set before us is laudable for the nation as a whole. Otherwise, as a first step in democracy "the right of every individual to education", if not guaranteed and provided

for, would be only tom-fooling democracy. Rightly does article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly contemplate that "every-one has the right to education".

Therefore, the flood-gate of knowledge has now been flung wide open to all. It has two aspects. The first is, the constitutional obligation of the Government of India to provide free, and compulsory education to all, upto the age of 14, and, secondly, large-scale introduction of scholarships, especially to those, who for some reason or other, have been hitherto denied opportunities to educate themselves.

Education is, therefore, a responsibility of the national Government. This constitutional provision has been written into the law of the land, because of the conviction of the framers of the Constitution that "adult education is vital to the country's progress. It is a conviction born of a feeling that illiteracy is taken all over the world as a sign of backwardness and unfitness for civilised government".

Illiteracy is a curse that brings in its train, bigotry and superstition. Our country must have a wholly literate population, because, only on the foundation of an enlightened public opinion can we build the structure of liberty and sound government.

In a democracy such as ours, sovereignty lies with the people and Government emanates from them. In other words, it is the people who rule. And if they are to rule with wisdom and vision, the national interest demands, that they should be educated at least to the points where they :

- (a) Should know how to read and write for themselves;
- (b) Should be enlightened on what their rights and privileges are, and how they should exercise them intelligently;
- (c) Should know what their civic duties are, and how to perform them efficiently;
- (d) Should know how to participate in group activities, and to share ideas;
- (e) Should know how to develop civic understandings, and attitudes and to carry on co-operative ventures

for the progress of their family and the community;
and

- (f) Should take interest in public questions and issues
which affect the nation.

The mainstay of democracy is enlightened citizenry, which can be realised only through continuing educational processes that must stress fundamental and adult education. Then and then only, our Government can be called 'of the people, by the people and for the people'.

CHAPTER XIX

TOPSY-TURVY EDUCATION

The true basis of education is the study of the human mind,—infant adolescent and adult. Any system, however, founded on theories of academic perfection is not likely to produce a perfect mind if it ignores the instrument of study. What has to be borne in mind by the educationist is the fact, that he has to deal with, not dead material, but an infinitely subtle and sensitive organism, not easily comprehensible. One cannot shape an educational masterpiece out of a purely dead material; the perfection aimed at has to be worked in the elusive substance of mind, by adequately respecting the limits set by the weak human body.

It is true beyond doubt, that the current educational system is a great advance on many methods of the past. However, at the same time, it has to be conceded that, education at present, is by no means perfect in as much as it was not, even in the past. A comprehensive system of education, without the evils of strain and cramming, cannot by itself claim perfection. The obvious reason is, it is yet based on insufficient knowledge and understanding of human psychology.

In the past, it has to be admitted, there was over-emphasis on the mind. In recent times, however, the evil is mitigated and safeguarded to some extent, by an equal emphasis being laid on 'active habits and vigorous physical exercise'. But at the same time, the trend in modern education is towards a pragmatic approach, resulting eventually in an over-emphasis on practical aspects. Ultimately, the balance is not struck which is wished for as an ideal, but only a tilting over, which is dangerous.

So long as children are confined exclusively to instructions in the purely necessary, as in the pragmatic approach, their minds cannot be expected to grow to their full stature. It is not in accordance with man's nature that, he should be

imprisoned within the narrow bounds of the purely necessary. Rightly has Rabindranath Tagore, the great educationist pointed out that 'if free reading is not intermingled with the indispensable information, the child cannot grow into a fully mature man, perhaps he may be mature in years but he may yet remain very largely a boy in mind'.

Further, modern education has no high ideals, even though, the schools and colleges have latterly burdened their syllabus with a greater number of subjects than before. It has developed an unnatural craving for success in the examinations,—success in obtaining the largest number of marks, with the strictest economy of knowledge. What is the result? No doubt we pass examinations, but shrivel up into petty clerks, and we die young. Such a kind of education does not produce great minds, but only encourages us to make a foolish display of decorations, composed of borrowed feathers.

The first principle of true teaching is, 'that nothing can be taught'. The teacher is not instructor or taskmaster but is a helper and a guide. Sri Aurobindo says : "that a teacher does not actually train the pupil's mind; he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process".

Similarly, the main object of teaching is, not to explain meanings, but to knock at the door of the mind. In this connection, it may be relevant to consider what Rabindranath Tagore observes in his *Reminiscences*, "If any boy is asked to give an account of what is awakened in him at such knocking he will probably say something very silly. For, what happens within, is much bigger than what he can express in words". The same educationist further adds, "Those who pin their faith on 'varsity examinations as a test of all educational results take no account of this fact".

Does not then a careful study of the present system of education point out the truth, that it is not in the order as it should be, but topsy-turvy? It is left to the true educationists of our country, to see that the educational system is set in order, without being over-hasty in their craze for reforms.

CHAPTER XX

TO-MORROW'S SCHOOL

A Study in Sociological Perspective

Education is dynamic in its character. It is not rigidly fixed or static. Education in its journey has undergone many changes even in the past, in order that it might suit the needs of the times. Even to-day, there are many who are not satisfied with the existing system of education, just as there were many in the past also, who were far from satisfied with the then existing system of education. That shows, that there is no ideal system of education, which will suit all times. The history of education is a great testimony to that fact—across the span of centuries, education in different parts of the world has changed, to meet the constantly expanding needs of man.

Whenever there has been a change in the system of education, it has more often than not, been a result of the necessity of the times. Every change in the physical nature of the external environment produced by scientific and technological advance, has, invariably carried in its train, certain other chain-reactions also, resulting in sweeping changes—changes in economic, political, social relations. Practically speaking, growth of knowledge has produced institutional changes. Before the nineteenth century, the impact of such changes was not so greatly felt by the people because of the inadequacy of modern communication media. But the impact has been more after the Second World War, due to the perfection of the mass media of communication, and their intensity has increased because, it has immense potentialities of penetrating the darker areas also. Naturally, attitudes and behaviour patterns, which once have been considered largely of local or regional concern or at most a concern of a nation, have now assumed global significance. In a sense, it has to be admitted that, the complex social processes that influence inter-action among individuals

and groups, have a degree of universality, with marginal allowances for its magnitude.

The modern approach to society, is sociological, somewhat as the biologists look at the society of all living things. This is known as the "ecological approach". It is one of the basic ideas of almost all science. Human society is regarded as an ecological system, or "eco system" consisting of populations of social species, acting and interacting on each other in a great variety of ways, through irreversible processes of "ecological succession".

In the present period, a revolutionary approach has come about in education. This new approach has two essential and important elements; first, the conception of education as 'the acquisition of new ways of behaving', and second, the idea that 'all education should serve a social function'. These two aspects of the educational 'subject-matter-centred approach'—in the sense, that in the past the whole *social emphasis* in education was neglected. The educational sociologist is now concerned with a programme of education which seeks to develop the attitudes, to measure their changes, and to give them direction towards the realisation of personality. This only demonstrates the dynamic character of education.

In the light of the above, the 'School of To-morrow' has continually to expand its areas of responsibilities. Of course, it is true that the school of to-day teaches the "Three R's" more effectively, than that of yesterday. The school of tomorrow shall seek, to improve the child's health, to provide guidance and counselling, to develop an appreciation of the arts, and a modicum of skill in them so that leisure time may be used more wisely, and to build moral and spiritual values.

The following are only generally suggestive of this responsibility which the To-morrow's school might have to take :—

Aims and Objectives of Education :

There have been many hundreds of statements of what education should accomplish. But the objectives of

education should be formulated rather as the basis of research on the needs of children, and the changing cultural pattern in India in the wake of the Community Development Programme,—both of the local community and of the nation in general, so that it may be in tune with the times.

Curricula :

The greatest change and obviously one which most directly reflects changes in social values, is that of the school curriculum. It is in this area where, there is the greatest conflict due perhaps to the pressure of groups with special interests (political parties), each seeking to incorporate its interests in the curriculum. The curricula of the To-morrow's school should be based, on 'changing individual needs in the light of the local, national and world development'. Careful studies will have to be made of the social outcomes, and the changes in the behaviour of the individual. As observed by Harvey W. Zorbaugh : "Educational sociology is interested, in working out a technique for measuring not the acquisition of 'knowledge' as reflected in verbal behaviour, but the changes in total behaviour in the direction of social adjustment".¹ In this connection, stress on national integration may be an aspect for deeper consideration for inclusion in the curricular content.

Class-room and School Organization :

Of course many types of organizations have been developed in the past, and glowingly sponsored by ambitious enthusiasts to-day; but, however, the results of current research could assist in determining the outcome of one, as compared with that of another need for educational research on problems of class-room and school organisation.

Method of Instruction :

Psychologists have developed many tests to determine the speed and extent of learning under various methods,

1. Harvey W. Zorbaugh, "Research in Educational Sociology," *Journal of Educational Sociology* Sept. 1927, 1 (1), 20.

but the educational sociologists have not yet developed comparable measures to determine other values.

The utility and efficacy of the method of instruction in the school of To-morrow shall however be fundamentally based on 'the extent to which knowledge imparted is wielded by love'. In the words of Bertrand Russell, "knowledge wielded by love is what the educator needs and what his pupils should acquire".²

Relation of the school to the community, the nation and the world:

It may be worthwhile to bear in mind, that studies of institutions, of class and caste, of tensions both intergroup and international have significant bearing on school community relations.

When all is said and done, it must be admitted that education, in so far as it is applicable to the mind, is a complex process, and that is the main reason why, our systems of mental education are so full of mistakes. Education as far as possible, and, especially at the primary level, has to be made a joyous adventure, since the educands are children and not adults. As Aldous Huxley points out 'it is wise to remember, that the mind is not a receptacle which can be mechanically filled. It is rather something which is ~~and~~ and must be nourished'. The failure of our educational system is to be attributed to our wrong attitudes to education. *And this is reflected in certain fallacies of our educational policy such as :—*

1. That which regards the intellect as a box inhabited by autonomous ideas whose numbers can be increased by the simple process of opening the lid of the box and introducing new ideas.

2. Another fallacy is that which regards all minds as being alike and can profit by the same system of training.

Therefore, so long as we do not recognise certain fundamental psychological bases, namely the fact, that 'minds are living organisms and not dustbins, irreducibly dis-

2. Bertrand Russell, *On Education*, Unwin books.

similar and not uniform', the official system of education currently in vogue is not and cannot as might be expected, be particularly successful. How can great minds be made to order by any system of training, however perfect? At best, what we can hope to do is, to train every individual to realise all his potentialities and become completely himself. As pertinently observed by Aldous Huxley "the educational system we must aim at producing in the future, is one which gives to every boy and girl an opportunity for the best that exists. The ideal system of education must be democratic, although that ideal is not immediately attainable".³

The same educationist is careful enough to suggest, that while emphasising the need for democratic education, insistence upon a dead level of uniformity would prove disastrous in its results. He is confirmed that "progress should not be sacrificed to a mechanical equality at the present moment; we must approach educational democracy carefully, so as to destroy in the process as little as possible of the valuable products that happen to have been associated with social injustice". *In the School of To-morrow, we should not belittle the importance of the humanistic elements in education in our raging passion for overemphasising the utilitarian elements.* It is in the fitness of things that 'we should preserve the balance between the humanistic and utilitarian elements in the curricula'. We are living at a period of time when, the sum of human knowledge and the complexity of human problems are ever on the increase. Does it not then point to the need therefore, that every generation must overhaul its educational methods, if time is to be found for what is new? To quote Bertrand Russell again :

"It is not important to increase the amount of what is learnt above that now usually taught to the children of the professional classes. What is important is the spirit of adventure and liberty, the sense of setting out upon a voyage of discovery. If formal education is given in this spirit, all the more intelligent pupils will supplement it by their own efforts, for which every opportunity should be provided".

3. Aldous Huxley. Collected Works—Prose Studies. Chatto and Windus, London, 1957.

Before any progress is possible, in the first place, educators need merely to face the new tasks of education. Schools of education and teachers' colleges also need, to revise in a realistic and fundamental way, their programmes of instructions and their underlying philosophy. Besides, educators will have to boldly face their new relationship to the Community with a new programme and a new vision. And above all else, the improvement of education to a large extent will depend, upon the attitude of our citizens. Are people willing to permit and then support a new programme, if it is really good and useful to the community at large? Lastly, the whole future of education,—'Tomorrow's school', hinges crucially upon the kind of leadership that educators can provide. Will it be forthcoming?

CHAPTER XXI

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN INDIA—A STUDY IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

The idea of a University is not anything new to the Indian soil since ancient history bears ample testimony to the existence of several Universities during the Buddhist period and in Universities like Nalanda, we are told that something like 10,000 students used to prosecute higher studies, drawn from different parts of Asia.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The proposal for the establishment of a University of the modern type, however, seems to have been made for the first time by the Council of Education in 1845, but it was negatived by the Directors on the ground of the attempt being rather premature. Later, the Despatch of 1854 (Wood's Despatch) directed that Universities should be established at Calcutta and Bombay (and at Madras if possible). All the Universities were to be modelled on the London University which was then merely an examining body. The Senates were to consist of a Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor and fellows—all of whom were to be nominated by Governments. The functions of the Universities were mainly to hold examinations and confer degrees.

Colleges were in existence in India even before the establishment of Universities in 1857, but they were quite different from the Colleges of to-day. The Government of India passed Acts of Incorporation of the three Universities—Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857. The act nominated the first Chancellor, (Government of the Province) Vice-Chancellor and fellows (ex-officios and ordinary). The Senate was entrusted with the day-to-day administration of the University.

The object of the University is defined in the preamble of the Bombay University Act. e.g., "to be the ascertaining

by means of examination, the persons who have acquired proficiency" in different branches of learning and "rewarding them by Academical Degrees, as evidence of their respective attainments".

The type of University Organisation that was created by the Acts of 1857 was the Affiliating University. In this form of organization, the affiliating Colleges were the real centres of learning, and the University itself was not a Unit of teaching but a mere unit of administration whose sole duty was to hold examinations and confer degrees.

During the period 1857-1882, the development of Colleges was fairly rapid, and an important feature of this period was the entry of Indian private enterprise into the field of the direct management of Collegiate institutions.

THE PERIOD 1882-1902 :

The Indian Education Commission, known as the Hunter Commission, appointed by the Government of India in 1882, was precluded from studying Collegiate education and therefore, it could not study the problems of Collegiate education in a comprehensive manner, and therefore its recommendations on their subjects are not so important as those on secondary or primary education. One of its important recommendations, however, marked the discontinuance of the system of payment by results, in so far as grants to Colleges were concerned.

During the two-decades following the report of the Indian Education Commission, the Indian Universities continued to work under the provisions of the Act, 1857. The notable events of the period were the establishment of the Allahabad University in 1887 and the Punjab University in 1882. It was also an examining body like the others. Other noteworthy features of this period were : that a large number of students seeking admissions to Colleges increased very largely year by year, since lucrative jobs under Government were open to holders of University degrees. Missionary institutions dominated private effort in Collegiate education in 1882, but the situation began to alter after the report of the Commission. There was a rapid increase in the

number of Colleges of general education. Some progress was also achieved during this period in the direction of Training Secondary Teachers. For instance, in 1901, there were six training colleges as against only two in 1882. In the year 1901-1902, the total number of Colleges is reported to be one-hundred and thirty six, run by various institutions like the Government, Committees, Municipalities, Missions and Indians. Of these, some were specifically meant for Europeans and women.

INDIAN UNIVERSITY COMMISSION OF 1902;

Lord Curzon began his drive for reform at the University stage, and he appointed in January 1902 a commission to inquire into the conditions and prospects of the Universities in British India, and to recommend such measures as may tend to elevate the standard of University teaching and to promote the advancement of learning. The main recommendations of the Commission related to the adoption of the model of the London University as modified by the Act of 1898. In 1902, as in 1857, the policy of London University seemed to be the last word of educational statesmanship. At this time, the features of the London University were characterised by their special emphasis on the following aspects :—Teaching Universities, provision of adequate equipment and staff : wide teacher representation; and the fact that the Senate should not be too large.

The fundamental problems before the Commission were :

To determine the type of University Organization that should be ultimately developed in India; and to prepare such transitional arrangements as would enable the country to reach this pre-determined goal in the shortest possible time.

It is to be regretted however, that the Commission did not, in its report, discuss these fundamental questions. The report of the Commission, therefore, and the Act of 1904, did not aim at the fundamental reconstruction of the Indian University System. They only proposed a rehabilitation and strengthening of the then existing system of affiliating Universities.

The Indian Universities Act of 1904 proposed to introduce a number of changes, of which the following two were carried out in practice,—namely, a proposal to make the Senate of a manageable size; and the introduction of stricter conditions for the affiliation of Colleges to a University.

CRITICISM OF THE ACT OF 1904 :

It did nothing to overhaul the system of University education and put it on a proper basis. Under the new Act, the University became practically a department of the State. The Act did not create any new Universities. Rather, it gave much control to the Government in the administration of Universities as “the most completely Government Universities in the World”. Further, under this Act, regulations were framed by all Universities for the recognition of schools. These regulations laid down the conditions which must be fulfilled by a recognized Secondary School, and virtually closed the backdoor for forbidding admission to the Matriculation of any private candidates except those who had really been educated in private.

POSITION ON THE EVE OF DIARCHY.

Lord Curzon sanctioned a grant of 5 lakh rupees a year for 5 years (then it became a recurring grant) for the improvement of Collegiate education and Universities, and this enabled the Universities to undertake teaching functions and to equip libraries and laboratories.

The Government Resolution on Educational policy dated 21st February, 1913 declared that a University would be established in every province, that teaching activities of Universities would be encouraged and that the Colleges located in mofussil towns would be developed into teaching Universities in due course, but no action along these lines was taken by Government.

In 1917, again the Government appointed another Commission to report on the reform of the Calcutta University (Sadler commission) or otherwise called ‘Calcutta University Commission’. The report of this Commission had far reaching consequences upon the development of Univer-

sity education in India as a whole. The Commission felt a need for a comprehensive study and in this connection visited most other Indian Universities. Its report of 1919 is a document of inter-Provincial importance.

The Commission of 1882 and 1902 could not do full justice to the subject of higher education because, the first was precluded from reporting on the Universities, and the second was precluded from studying the problems of secondary education. The Calcutta University Commission, on the other hand studied the problems of Secondary education as well as those of University teaching, because it held the view that improvement of "Secondary education" was an essential foundation for the improvement of University teaching itself. The Commission therefore made certain radical recommendations regarding the re-organization of Secondary education. Some of the chief recommendations related to the following :—

that regulations governing the work of Universities should be made less rigid;

that Honours courses should be introduced in Universities;

that the duration of the Honours Courses should be 3 years after Intermediate:

that a Director of Physical Education should be appointed in each University:

that Universities must make provision for professional and vocational training; and

that, Applied Sciences and Technology should be included in its Courses.

During this period of nearly thirty years, following the year 1887, till 1916, no new Universities were established in India, though there was a tremendous rise in the number of Colleges and of students attending them. For instance, the number of Universities in India increased from only 5 in 1916 to 12 in 1921-22. Of the 12, 5 were purely teaching Universities and the remaining were mainly of an affiliating type, although they undertook teaching work also.

PROGRESS DURING 1921-37:

The period 1921-37 was characterised by great advance in University education. During this period, the first All-India Conference of Indian Universities was held at Simla in 1924, and an Inter-University Board was established for the co-ordination of the work of Indian Universities consisting of the representatives of all the Indian Universities. Further, in accordance with the Government Resolution of Educational Policy dated 21st February, 1913, five new Universities came to be incorporated e.g. Delhi, Andhra, Agra, Nagpur and Annamalai Universities. During this period under review, many of the older Universities in India underwent changes also. The number of University Departments and constituent or affiliated Colleges increased from 207 in 1921-22 to 446 in 1936-37. Besides, a number of new faculties were opened and provision was made for the teaching of new courses.

What about the aims of University education during all these periods? Studied periods-wise, it would reveal that during 1854-1902, the aim of University education was "not so much the encouragement of learning, as the liberation of Indian mind from the thralldom of old world ideas and the assimilation of all that is highest and best in the life and thought and character of the west". In the subsequent period, 1902-1921, attention was, however, paid to teaching and research, but their actual achievements were not considerable. During 1921-1937 something more was done in regard to research, which was organized on a large-scale, than ever before. During this period, the development of inter-Collegiate and inter-University activities were considerable.

This period also witnessed the provision of military training by the Organization of University Training Corps (U.T.C.) which is now being replaced by the National Cadet Corps (N.C.C.) of a compulsory character, for all, in all universities, particularly after the declaration of National Emergency due to the Chinese threat of invading India. This period is also remarkable for great attention that was paid to the problem of the residence and health of the students

e.g. provision was made for medical check-up, and inspection and compulsory physical education in Universities.

The Sapru Committee appointed in 1934 by the U.P. Government, specially meant for looking into the causes of unemployment in Uttar Pradesh, was of the view "that much of the unrest was primarily due to mass unemployment, and that the system of education commonly prevalent prepared pupils only for examinations and degrees, and not for a vocation in life". This committee recommended for the first time, the institution of diversified courses of study at the secondary stage, and a general course at this stage should lead to the University, and that the Degree Course at the University should extend over a period of three years (as the Three year Degree Course at present).

The Abbot-Wood report of 1936-37, was in a way connected with problems of educational reorganization and particularly vocational education, in view of the fact that a large number of University Graduates were not securing employment of a kind for which education qualified them. One of the important results of their recommendation has been that a modern type of technical education—"the polytechnic" has come into existence, many of which are now being affiliated to the existing Universities.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY AND AFTER :

The work of educational reconstruction undertaken by the popular ministries was, however, cut short by the Great Second World War, which broke out in 1939. The Congress Ministers resigned soon after, and therefore nothing considerable could be done. As Victory came within sight, post-war planning began to be considered by the Government of India and early in 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education, which was an All India Advisory body, set up by the Government of India, presented the country with their comprehensive plan of post-war educational reconstruction in India. The report was popularly known as the Sargent Report, after Sir John Sargent who was then Educational Adviser to the Government of India.

IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SARGENT REPORT :

One of the important recommendations of the Sargent report was related to the need for introduction of one year Pre-University Course followed by a University course of 3 years. Further, the report pointed out, certain defects in the then existing state of affairs of Indian Universities i.e. failure to relate their activities closely to the practical needs of the community as a whole; no attempt was made to adjust the output to the capacity of the employment market; there was over-emphasis on examinations. It was also pointed out that, the Indian Universities did not satisfy the requirements of a national system of education. Therefore, in the ultimate analysis, the Sargent Report pleaded for the abolition of the Intermediate course, and the institution of a 3 year degree course. It also appealed for institution of an Indian University Grants Committee.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SINCE INDEPENDENCE: UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMISSION OF 1948 :

Since Indian Independence, a number of new Universities have come into existence. In the meanwhile, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education and also of the Inter-University Board, the Government of India appointed a University Education Commission in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Commission which had to report primarily on University Education in India, had of necessity to review the position of Secondary Education in the country as well. It made certain notable suggestions for improvement of University education and secondary education also. This Commission noted with great concern the marked deterioration of the standards of teaching and examinations, and increasing dissatisfaction with the conduct of the administration and election to the University authorities. It also observed, that with the increasing complexity of society and its shifting patterns of emphasis, the Universities have to change their objectives and methods if they were to function effectively in our normal life. The

Commission accordingly formulated a comprehensive policy for a thorough re-organisation of the University education in the country. The report of the Commission, has proved to be a remarkable one on the functions of a University. The Commission's recommended reforms are now being gradually introduced in our Universities. According to the University Education Commission, the aims and objectives of teaching are to be "the transmission of the intellectual and ethical heritage of humanity of the young; the enrichment of this heritage and extension of the frontiers of knowledge and the development of personality".

One of the important recommendations of the University Education Commission was related to the introduction of the Three-Year Degree Course, a subject of live comment for the past half a century or so. Now about 30 Universities are reported to have either already introduced the 3 year Degree Course or accepted the same in principle.

The Commission made notable recommendations in regard to the maintenance of high standards of teaching, reorganization of courses of study, proper development of Post-Graduate training and research, reform of the various branches of professional education and of present examination systems, imparting of religious instructions, improvement of physical welfare of students, their corporate life and social service, constitution and control of Universities, and the establishment of new Universities including those for the rural areas.

The University Education Commission endorsed the view of the Sargent Scheme, in abolishing the present Intermediate (almost abolished now) and introducing a 3 year Degree Course, and extending the period of secondary education by one more year. The commission was also of opinion, that English should be replaced gradually by the Indian languages as a medium of instruction and that English must compulsorily be made a second language. In pursuance of this scheme, of late, some Indian Universities introduced an option to answer the papers in the mother tongue or the regional language at the Intermediate (Present Pre-University), B.A., B.Com., stages. A combination of

humanities, with Natural and Social Sciences has also been recommended to cure the ills of narrow specialisation. In this regard also, some of the Indian Universities have already introduced general education courses at the Intermediate and Pass courses.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (of 1953) :

One further step in the matter of University Education in India, has been the appointment of the University Grants Commission, which is an autonomous body created in 1953. This organization has been taking all the necessary measures to promote and co-ordinate University education, and to determine and maintain standards of teaching, examinations and research in Universities. The financing of Universities is regulated at present, by this Grants Commission. It provides an agency, free from rigid Governmental control, that can study the needs of Universities and makes grants of money to them. The University Grants Commission has been largely responsible for seeing to it that the grants allotted to Universities are properly utilised and spent in time for the purpose meant. It has been exercising its control over University with great caution, to see that there are no fraudulent mis-utilisation of funds, and that high standards of recruitment, teaching and research are carried out. The U.G.C. has been closely associated with the proposal made by the Government of India for the introduction of a 3 year Degree Course in the Universities. The 3 year Degree Course is part of an over-all scheme to improve the quality of collegiate and secondary education in the country. Ever since the oldest of the modern Universities was established in India, the principal pattern of University education leading to the first Degree Course in Arts, Science and Commerce, has consisted of a 4 year Degree Course broken into 2 years of Intermediate and 2 years of Post-Intermediate work. Of course, even now, the controversy over this issue,—the wisdom of change-over, is raging wide in the country and is being questioned. There is stout opposition to this scheme and it is not readily accepted by the public and teachers. Whether the new scheme of a 3 year Degree will deliver the goods still remains to be seen.

DESHMUKH COMMITTEE OF 1956 ;

Last, but not least, mention may be made in passing, about the Deshmukh Committee on Three year Degree Course. This committee was appointed in October 1956, in order to prepare an estimate of the proposed 3 year Degree course in the Indian Universities, under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. D. Deshmukh. It has estimated that the total amount required to introduce the proposed reform (including recurring expenditure for 4 years) will be about Rs. 250 million. In the first stage, the Central Government is to provide Rs. 75 million and a similar amount will be found by the State Governments, including contributions from private management. The total amount of Rs. 150 million thus made available, will be sufficient for upgrading some 180 Intermediate Colleges and reorganizing 360 degree Colleges. This was the first target for the II Plan.

PROGRESS UNDER THE PLAN :

A Series of measures have been initiated in recent years by the University Grants Commission, Universities and other authorities in order to improve the quality of University education. Among these may be mentioned, apart from the introduction of the three-year degree course, improvement of libraries and laboratories, development of post-Graduate studies and research, provision of hostel facilities, institution of merit and research scholarships, improvement of salary scales of teachers, organisation of tutorials and Seminars, and greater attention to the welfare of students.

These programmes are expected to continue during the third plan also. In addition to these, it is also proposed to make larger provision for scholarships, fellowships, research studentships, etc. In order to considerably reduce the pressure on universities and colleges, it is proposed that evening colleges, correspondence courses and external examinations should be instituted on a large scale. The Delhi University has already introduced the Correspondence Course and the Madras University has agreed to run evening Colleges shortly.

Apart from the above, quite a number of schemes which were initiated during the second plan for bringing about a qualitative improvement in the University Education, will be implemented on a much larger scale in the third plan. Such measures will include among other things, examination reform, improvement of teacher-pupil ratio, grants for research and publications, organisation of seminars and conferences for discussion of important problems, and provision of amenities and facilities for students—hostel, health, playground and other facilities. Action along these would considerably contribute to the solution of the problem of student indiscipline, which is rampant everywhere.

In the third plan, a sum of Rs. 75 crores has been provided for University education as against Rs. 44 crores in the Second and Rs. 15 crores in the first. The programme that will be covered under this scheme would include provision of facilities for science teaching, raising the scales of pay of teachers, improvement of laboratories and libraries, provision of post-Graduate studies and research scholarships and loans, assistance for hostel and staff quarters and other schemes such as, Rural institutes, Evening Colleges, Correspondence courses and Pilot projects.

Another important programme, which is already under-way, is the scheme of "compulsory national service", in order to improve the quality of educated manpower. This scheme has in view, the channelling of the energies of youth, to socially fruitful purposes, and bringing to the students an intellectual and emotional awareness of, and identification with, the various tasks of social and economic reconstruction and security of the country. It is, in fact, essentially a measure of educational reform, designed to inculcate a sense of discipline, national unity, cohesion and a spirit of social service and dignity of labour among students.

UNIVERSITY POPULATION :

In the first year of Independence, the University population is calculated to be roughly about 2,30,000 and in 1951-52, it rose to 4,60,000 in University classes and Colleges. The number of students in these institutions in arts, science, and

commerce will have increased from 6,34,000 in 1955-56 to about 9,00,000 in 1960-61.

UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR TYPE : THREE BROAD CATEGORIES.

At the time of Independence, there were only 19 Universities and at the end of the Second Plan, there would have been 41 universities and about 1050 Colleges. The Universities in India, can be broadly divided into three categories according to their functional bases. Affiliating Universities; Affiliating and Teaching Universities, and Residential and Technical Universities.

The affiliating Universities which form the majority in the country do not themselves undertake teaching but merely prescribe courses of study, conduct examinations and award degrees and diplomas for Colleges affiliated.

The affiliating and teaching Universities offer teaching and research facilities, in addition to the other functions. But this is generally done at the Post-Graduate level, and in some cases at the Post-Intermediate level.

The residential and teaching Universities form a microscopic minority and they are unitary organisations, controlling all the Colleges under their jurisdiction in all respects and undertaking teaching at all levels (e.g.) The Viswa Bharati, Benaras Hindu University and Annamalai University in the South.

Almost all Indian Universities at present, have facilities of arts, science, medicine, agriculture, technology, engineering, commerce, and teaching, although sometimes, they may be grouped together or included under a different name. The courses of study have also developed considerably. The old literary bias has been largely corrected. Specialised instruction is now being imparted in diverse fields. Many of the Universities directly impart such instructions through their own Departments, while in others, where teaching is done through Colleges, wholly or in part, it is increasingly being subjected to regulation and co-ordination by the Universities.

INSTRUCTION MEDIUM AT UNIVERSITIES : A NEBULOUS ISSUE.

The question as to what should be the national language of the country, has long been settled, but the question of what shall be the instruction medium is still a nebulous issue. It is quite natural that the language problem should continue to occupy the centre of the stage in all discussions, pertaining to national unity. Much has been said on this subject already, from so many points of view, that it may be doubted whether, there will be anything new to say (e.g.) the University Education Commission's report, The National Integration Council's resolution, Sampurnanad Committee's report, and a host of others. There have been many conferences Committees, statements and reports on this matter, but none of the sentiments expressed so far, seem to be free from low-level attachments of linguistic chauvinism. The difficulty of arriving at anything like a national consensus on a question, which can rouse a great passion and fierce loyalties is still inherent in the task.

The latest resolution of the National Integration Council (1961), may be regarded as one stage in the evolving of an intelligible language policy—intelligent and acceptable language policy, which could make the inevitable transition from pre independence to the post freedom social order, as smooth as possible, at the same time, strengthening the forces making for national integration. The N.I.C. resolution, it will be seen, while emphasising the new importance which the regional languages and Hindi must receive in a free and democratic country, has firmly urged that English should in no circumstances, be jettisoned or compelled to take a back-seat in the educational system. The significance of the following passage in the council's resolution is worthy of attention : "the Council lays stress on the importance of teaching English as a compulsory subject, whether in any transitional scheme for the adopting of regional languages as medium of instruction, or even after the replacement had been fully carried out at a future date. In the transitional stage English will serve as the link among University men and between University and University in respect of exchange

of Professors or migration of students ; whilst, at all times, as a language of great international importance, English would furnish a link with the outside world, constitute an indispensable tool for further study and assist in the development of the regional languages". Though English, it was underlined, would be a language of international link at all times, its place, it has been stated, as a language of inter-state and inter-University link would be gradually taken by Hindi. Therefore, it has been urged, that at the University stage, students should be equipped with a progressively better command of Hindi, in addition to a working knowledge of English.

One relieving feature of the N.I.C. resolution is its urge that, the pace of change could be determined primarily by the Universities themselves. Some universities in the North have already switched over to the regional medium and the Madras University has since, on an experimental measure, switched over to Tamil as instruction medium in the College at Coimbatore. But what about the result ? The recent declaration of the Madras Minister of Education that, the Coimbatore experiment has failed to evoke public response, and has proved an utter failure, is a good pointer to future education, and is therefore worthy of careful examination.

What about the Sampurnanand Committee's report ? The substance of the resolution of the committee on the question of the place of English and Hindi and the regional language in education, is not far different . It observed :

"As regards the Medium for University education, while a plea was made for the use of Hindi as the medium on all-India basis, the general view was that the regional languages are bound to replace English as the medium of instruction as soon as necessary preparations for the change-over could be made acceptable to the academic world. Further, the Sampurnanand Committee took the same stand in regard to the link language, which must ultimately be Hindi, but it has however, tentatively accepted English to continue to be such a link till Hindi develops fully. The Committee also implied in its report, that "English apart from

continuing as a transitional link, will remain as language of international importance for the enrichment of our language in regard to Science and technology". The conclusions of the Sampurnanand Committee did not differ materially from the decision in regard to the medium of instruction at the University stage arrived at by the *Chief Ministers' Conference*, as also that they had since been accepted by the Educational Integration Committee in its preliminary report.

Again, the significance of the observation of the Sampurnanand Committee that "while generally speaking the replacement of English as medium was an inevitable end which should be actively pursued, every care should be taken by Universities to ensure that the transition is made without jeopardising the quality of education, and after careful preparation, for example, the co-operation of teachers and the availability of good standard books written by University teachers or other experts for which every incentive should be provided by the authorities concerned", should not be lost on those in authority.

The solution of the Indian Language problem, and particularly the instruction medium at the University level, bristles with difficulties. The statement that the regional language shall ultimately be the medium of instruction, needs reconsideration. The decision in favour of the mother tongue or the regional language would lead to narrowness in education. The Inter-University Board is stressing the need for equalisation of standards, with a view to facilitating migration of students from one University to another, but if the regional language is accepted as the instruction medium, the contemplated migration would become altogether impossible. Recruitment of teachers will also have to be made on a regional basis, and the field of choice will become very restricted. When the UNESCO is thinking in terms of an 'International Student Exchange Programme' on a large scale, and when schemes are being drawn up for securing international co-operation in the field of education, it is a pity that we continue to think in terms of regions and even of the nation. Such a course of action is bound to lead to narrow linguistic chauvinism, and regional loyalties and affect the

unity of India. India cannot achieve national unity, unless we strengthen the cultural bonds of men who can express their thoughts in a common language.

The key solution of the problem lies in properly phasing the pace of change in such a manner that there is no violent break with the past. The trilingual formula that has been more or less accepted as a compromise solution involves the indefinite retention of English as an associate language for all India purposes as also for retaining the same as instruction medium at Universities for an equally indefinite period. Whether at the Centre or in the states, what has deliberately to be avoided is, an artificial forcing of the pace of change in the educational sphere, which is likely to have immediate adverse reactions on the education of the students. What is relevant at the moment is how the change should be brought about, without a fall in educational standards on the one hand, and without the erection of linguistic barriers between educated people from different regions, on the other. *It is here, that intelligent co-ordination and proper phasing of the transition to the new system is called for.*

The National Integration Council is absolutely right in urging, that the pace of change should be determined primarily by the Universities themselves. It is also right in insisting, that there should not be "any bar to the use of English or Hindi as a medium of instruction in a University or at least in some of its colleges", and there should be a provision in every University permitting Hindi or English as an option to the regional language or for answering examination papers. The council is therefore right in envisaging "that in some special circumstances, the establishment of such colleges might become a desideratum". When all is said and done, what is of prime importance in the sphere of education is, consideration that in no circumstances should enthusiasm for Hindi, or attachment to the regional language lead to a situation in which the nation is denied the continued use of English which it has served so well in the past, and must continue to serve in the future.

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS:

The question of maintenance of standards in Universities is another pressing problem to-day, which is seriously engaging the attention of the University Grants Commission. The quality has been deteriorating due to various reasons—the numbers entering Universities and Colleges have been rising rapidly in recent years and difficult problems relating to buildings, equipment and teachers have had to be faced. Quite a good number of candidates who seek admission in Universities and Colleges, either lack the aptitude or have been inadequately prepared for higher studies. It is in examining the latter problem that the U.G.C. has had to take up the question of maintenance of standards in University education. The U.G.C. in its report for 1959-60 has stated that while “our good students were as good as any students in any part of the world we have even at the present time in our Universities, far too many unfit students, who have come in merely because they did not know what else to do and because, sufficiently strict standards were not applied in admitting them to the University”. Naturally, this has entailed enormous wastage in University Education (i.e.) one half of the candidates who embark on a University course, fail to get a degree in the normal period.

There are many possible explanations for this wastage at the University level : too rapid expansion of Collegiate education, overcrowding in colleges, dilution in the calibre and equipment of students entering colleges, a decline in the quality of teachers, because of the better opportunities available to the talented in other fields than in teaching, paucity of laboratory and other facilities for teaching of science, constant changes in syllabi and medium of instruction in schools unrelated to the necessary demands of University education, and particularly in the sphere of professional and technical education, and last but not least the introduction of political considerations in regulating admissions to Colleges. That the cumulative result of all these factors has been a general deterioration in the average attainments of candidates, emerging from Universities, is true. The several annual reports in recent years of the Public

Service Commission in a number of states have only confirmed this statement of poor performance of Graduate-candidates appearing for their examinations. It is high time that the U.G.C. sets about the task of evaluating the standard of University education in the country, conducts the enquiry in a scientific spirit to determine all the factors responsible for fall in standards. It would be better that the enquiry of the U.G.C. in this regard, makes a probe into the progress of Post-Graduate education and the working of research departments in Universities also, covering the record of students in these spheres, since the ultimate test of the utility and value of the Universities will be determined by the extent to which they serve to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and promote original thinking and enquiry.

Another aspect of the problem of University standards that needs toning up, and careful consideration, is the question related to 'maintenance of uniformity in the standards for various degrees awarded by the various Universities'. At present, there do exist several anomalies in this regard and due to lack of uniformity in this, rational comparison between the products of the various universities, is becoming increasingly difficult and impossible. As a result of these incongruities, considerable hardship has been experienced by candidates of certain Universities in seeking admission to others and sometimes injustice is also meted out to students belonging to Universities which are more strict and rigid than others.

Of course, it may not be easy to raise all Universities to the level of the best ones in regard to the award of degrees, particularly at the Post-Graduate and professional levels, but what must be possible and should be aimed at, is a fair measure of uniformity in achievement, and performance in the criteria applied. In the absence of such uniform standards of assessment, the balance might tilt unfavourably against individual students, while who find that Graduates from universities which are rather lax about maintaining high standards for the award of distinctions have an advantage over them in applying for Government jobs for which qualifications such as a I class are prescribed. It would

be better if the U.G.C., strives, not only for raising University standards but also for achieving a certain level of uniformity among all Indian Universities in regard to the general academic performance and the quality of the men they turn out.

THE FUTURE :

India needs more Universities of the residential or Unitary type like Benaras, Viswa-Bharathi and the Annamalai University rather than the affiliating ones. Indian Forest Universities of the Upanishadic periods are well-known for the close intimacy and relationship, between the teacher and the student. But unfortunately, in India, during the past several centuries, we have failed to recapture the true Indian nation spirit, in the sphere of education in all its stages. Thanks to the noble efforts of Dr Rabindranath Tagore India to-day possesses alone among the many, at least One Vishwa-Bharathi, where the unique characteristics of ancient Indian cultural traditions have been tried to be preserved and enriched. To recapitulate the observation of the University Commission's report : "The general advancement of rural India will call for an ever increasing range and quality, of skill and training. To supply these, and meet the requirements of an educated citizenry, a system of rural colleges and Universities is necessary. It is suggested that a rural University should include a ring of small, resident and undergraduate Colleges, with specialised University facilities at the centre. A Common Core of liberal education may be assumed for the rural University as for any other, though the methods used in teaching and in learning may be different".

CHAPTER XXII

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The proper education of women in Independent India is an important problem. To-day, public opinion is as much with educated women as with educated men. It is rather with the woman who wishes to be educated and who throws off the yoke of custom in order to educate herself. The Indian nation can never be free till the Indian woman has ceased to be a slave. Nor can the Indian nation ever be free in the true sense of the term, till the Indian woman has ceased to be ignorant. It does not mean that Indian womanhood as such is bound in eternal slavery nor does it mean that Indian womanhood is blinded as it were by ignorance. But the fact is that both in the relative status of sexes and in the ideas of their education, our present system does afford room enough for every considerable modification. The point is, whether that modification is to come through the activities of the social reformers or by the extensive diffusion of education—education on a mass scale of an universal nature as at present. The difference between the two processes is great indeed but at the same time, the contribution of each is by no means insignificant.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL REFORMS :

In India, the influence of social reformers on preparing Indian womanhood for social change has preceded that of the influence of diffusion of education. The Nationalist Movement for Freedom is an instance in point, which has been rather a fore-runner of India's progress of education of women later in the post-Independence era. Perhaps, what may be of doubtful value is that of the social reformers trying to impose their ideas on the generality, believing implicitly in the infallibility of the reforms they advocate. The social reform temperament in a sense is the tempera-

ment of the missionary. On the other hand, the process of social evolution through the wider diffusion of education, is essentially a process of raising the general standard of opinion and thus making social reform the real expression of the conscious will of the community at large.

Substantial progress has been since the last thirties of this century in the provision of social education for women, who in their earlier years were completely denied the benefit of literacy. Since the Gandhi Movement, the concept of adult education has assumed a larger significance and has been enlarged so as to cover a larger ground. Since 1937, this concept, rather enlarged concept with emphasis on functional aspects of literacy and a practical approach to social problems has been accepted widely as the keystone of social and educational policy in India. As soon as the Gandhi trend began to gain ground, the sporadic movement or the campaign for abolishing illiteracy among adults and particularly mothers, became a sub-continental movement which is still a sustaining force to-day.

IDEALS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION :

What shall be the ideal of women's education in India? There have always been differing opinions on this head. Even great men have never agreed as to what shall be the ideal of women's education. Mahatma Gandhi for instance, who was a staunch fighter for the rights of women, held a certain independent views of his own, which others might not agree.

To recall his words :

“Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair being supplementary to one another ; in framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married pair and therefore it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home fe

is the sphere of woman and therefore in domestic affairs in the upbringing and education of children women ought to have more knowledge".¹

The question however arises whether we are to perpetuate the old status relation of sexes in our educational ladder. According to Gandhi, branches of knowledge should not be closed to any one in particular—no water-tight compartmental division of knowledge. But he was emphatic that unless courses of instruction were based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles as enunciated above, the fullest life of man and woman could not be developed. Looking at the process of human evolution we find, that it has surely been in the progressive differentiation of sexes which has now become a dominant and capital fact in all organised societies.

The question of sexual status or prestige level and education do affect us in an entirely different way—quite different from that of other societies. At present, the education of our females, such as it is, is largely in relation to the family and not to the community. Originally, that is, prior to the emancipation of women, the system of education was designed so as to 'make the child as it grows up a sweet and docile wife, an ideal mother, and when she reaches that age a self-sacrificing widow and able head of the family'. All that was an ideal, which was absolutely right then, as far as it went. But does it go far or as far as it should? It gives no place for the relation of women to the Community. That relation is only implied in a very limited sense in the ideal mother. According to this ideal, the business of the mother, as far as the Community is concerned, is to rear up ideal citizens. Even Gandhiji held the view: "I do not believe in women working for a living or undertaking commercial enterprises".² Naturally, therefore, according to Gandhi, a life of pure materialism and outward activity was meant more for man than for woman.

1. *Towards New Education*:—M.K. Gandhi, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1953-p. 71.

2. *Ibid*, p. 71.

SOCIAL VALUES GOVERNING WOMEN :

Now the question arises : does the social relationship of women end with rearing up excellent soldiers and sagacious politicians ? Is she merely a means and not an end in herself ? Can her faculties be fully and freely developed except in relation to the organised Community, and, by limiting her to the smallest possible community, the family are we not really limiting the development of her potentialities ? All these are relevant issues in the context of changing India, especially at a time when revolutionary changes are taking place in the attitudes and ideas of women. It is therefore evident, that any comprehensive solution of the educational problem must include the final destruction of the artificial limitation of feminine relationship to the family.

The question of how far the education of women should be related to familiar activity and to what extent it should go beyond and touch the wider horizons of the Community would depend on the system of social values held. This would naturally bring us to the pertinent question whether such an extension of the feminine activity through a different idea of education, which while perpetuating the healthy status in relation of sexes as of old, does not limit the female to the family, would affect adversely that vital point of our civilization—the joint family system. However, it is by no means clear, to what extent, whether a higher individuation of the units that compose the family would tend to a weakening of the strong hold of the ancient but reverently held social value system and its break-up and it also does not seem to be true that a freer interpretation of the position of women in society must lead to a disintegration of the family.

What seems perhaps quite clear is, that the joint family system as it is, according to the modern view, with all its merits, tends very considerably to be something outworn, out-dated, and somewhat of a dead weight in the matter of freer, fuller and healthier familial life. And therefore, the widely held view of modern sophisticated women is that “a purification of the joint family system in its essentials can come only through the increasing intelligence of women”. Looked at from a sociological angle, women’s education as

long as it is imparted with the sole view of perpetuating the status relation of the sexes, or on the other hand, is based on the idea that such differences ought not to exist, would remain wholly unreal, disturbing the whole fabric of social organisation and sapping the very vital roots of all social existence.

The education of women, such as was given in the past in India, inclined to the second alternative of ignoring the existence of sexual differences. That was why perhaps, women's education in India had been a totally disturbing, instead of consolidating, factor in Indian social life. The Indian joint-family life being indeed the realised truth of a thousand generations, requires peculiar consideration in our educational problem. Our ideal should not be to destroy but to purify it.

PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION SINCE INDEPENDENCE :

The secret of material progress all over the world has proved to be investment in human beings—universal, compulsory and free education. The Government of India has also wisely laid down in Article 45 of the Constitution that there shall be provision of Universal compulsory and free education for all children between the ages of 6—14 (as originally envisaged). It is a good thing that education has been recognised as the basic condition for social and economic progress. The Five-Year Plans have marked a further step forward—a great leap forward in the expansion of educational facilities and particularly the democratic set up of the Constitution is largely the fore-runner of women's progress in education, whereby all kinds of discriminations on grounds of sex become illegal. The educational development of our country since Independence, has rather proved to be a unique field of great opportunities and challenges for men and more for women, hitherto deprived—opportunities afforded by our democratic system of Government and challenges thrown up by the tasks of national reconstruction.

Since Independence, there is no restriction on a girl's studying at any kind of educational institution. An increasing

number of women are now-a-days entering the hitherto closed doors of Engineering Colleges, Polytechnics, Agricultural Colleges and the Indian Administrative Service, quite apart from the regular professions like medicine, nursing, teaching, social work and various kinds of clerical establishments, etc. Ever since the inauguration of the Community Development Movement in India, women have found increasing opportunities to serve women folk in rural areas in various capacities of village level workers (Gramsevikas), Social Education Organisers, Health Visitors, Home Science Assistants and Women Welfare Officers at different levels in various parts of the country. Women are no longer the domesticated pets, confined within the four walls of a sheltered home, cut off from the stream of life. They are now representing various bodies, entering legislatures, championing the causes of women to remove all kinds of disabilities to which they were heir to. Women are now piloting reforms for anti-dowry bills, suppression of trafficking on women etc. Women's Welfare Organisations are educating the unsophisticated in the need for cleanliness, removal of purdah, exercise of their franchise and to participate in all kinds of women's welfare activities. In fact, an attempt is being made to enable women to be in a position to stand on their own and pay their own way.

THE CHANGING SOCIAL OPINION :

The climate of social (Public) opinion is also gradually changing in the direction of the acceptance of the rightness in widow remarriage which is no longer considered a blur on Indian women. With the right to education, on a par with man, more girls are attending schools now-a-days, with the result, there is a decline in child marriages. The Family Planning Organisation and its wide network in different parts of the country, has marked a great step forward in the social education of the Indian women. Women are increasingly feeling, and are also being made to feel, that motherhood need not be imposed on them reluctantly;—whereas that there is a way now by which a woman can free herself from irksome motherhood—unwanted babies being

prevented from being born, at the same time, maintaining normal conjugal relationships.

Educational facilities for training of primary and secondary women teachers are increasing in numbers and many special schools for girls have been established within 16 years of freedom. Statistics regarding our achievements in the last two plans do reveal that women's education has made considerable progress—though girls' education while compared with boys' education seems to be disappointingly low. The Third Plan Draft Outline shows that, "It is estimated that by the end of the second plan about 60 per cent of the children in the age group 6—11 will be at the school. During the period 1950-51 to 1960-61, the proportion of boys in this age-group attending school has increased from 60 to 79 per cent and girls from 20 to 40 per cent. There is still a marked disparity between boys and girls attending schools although this is steadily diminishing". Because of this factor and because certain areas are especially backward it is estimated that by the end of the Third Plan, the proportion of children in the age group 6—11 at school may not exceed 80 per cent or so. The Draft Outline further adds: "In the case of boys, it could be possible to ensure universal coverage, but in the case of girls the proportion may go up only to about 60 per cent". Further, this disparity takes regional shapes in the sense that the proportion of girls in this age-group attending school is markedly lower than the average in six States, namely Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Orissa. In order to correct regional disparities in these States, the primary education programme will be given the resources and facilities, so that the All-India figures may reach about 80 percent at the end of the Third Plan.

The same disparity prevails in the group 11—14 also. The Third Plan Draft Outline observes: "In the course of the ten years 1951-61, the proportion of pupils in the age group 11—14 will have arisen from 13 per cent to about 23

3. Third Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline, p. 99.

*4. Ibid, p. 99.

per cent. In this group also, the disparity between boys and girls in schools, although diminishing, is still quite considerable, the proportion of boys at the end of the Second Plan to the population in the age-group being 34 per cent and that of girls only 11 per cent".⁵ What about the position at the secondary level? "The proportion of pupils in the age group 14—17 receiving secondary education will increase from about 5 per cent before the First Plan to about 12 per cent by 1960-61. By the end of the Third Plan, this proportion is expected to be a little over 15 per cent. At the secondary stage also, as in the elementary, there is considerable disparity between boys and girls, the proportion being respectively 24.5 and 6.7 per cent of the population in the age-group".⁶ In order to enroll a large number of girls in the schools, the Plan provides for some special programmes for girls' education.

In the sphere of University Education, there is now-a-days increasing enrollment of women in Indian Universities. For instance between 1950—1953, the number of women at Indian Universities doubled and in the latter year is reported to be 63,424. There is now one University for women—the S.N.D.T. Women's University intended exclusively for women, apart from several other Women's Colleges in Arts and Sciences. All of the Universities in India are to-day open to women as to men. And in addition to the Universities and their teaching departments, there are hundreds of Colleges for general education, the educational facilities of which are utilised for women. But co-education at the College stage is becoming increasingly popular and is being generally encouraged also.

The problem of "Women's Education" in India is something real, but not anything unique to India only. In the words of Schenkman :⁷

5. p. 100. (Ibid)

6. p. 101. (Ibid)

7. p. 19. Schenkman Alfred S.—*The Universities of India Their Yesterday and Their today*, Reprinted from the Visva Bharati Qrly, p. 19.

“Though it is in many ways probably a bigger problem in India than in Western Countries, especially in the Pre-University levels, because of old traditions and the strength of these. And yet statistically the picture is impressive. To-day there are 35,000 women enrolled in the Indian Universities and this is 12% of the total roll of Indian University Students. It is also two-and-a-half times the number of women students in the English Universities though in England women constitute 28% of the University Populations”.

What is needed to-day, in India is a broadening of the base of the educational system so as to permit a kind of flexibility in the movement in the educational ladder. Provision of increasing employment opportunities for women of the age-group 17 plus will do much to ease the situation and to attract more and more of them to higher education and much more so, if we can so educate our women as to overcome this reverently but widely held view that ‘the only honourable profession for a woman is marriage’. As more and more vocational, technical schools, and higher institutions are opened to cater to the needs of women, and when more women become Engineers, Technicians, Doctors, etc., gradually the old, ill-founded and unrealistic prejudice against women entering the professions, will lose their hold on the minds of men and as soon as this change comes, society will be prepared to accept women.

What remains to be done in the field of women's education is of course much greater than what has been done but let us have pride that we have now reached a stage of development when much greater efforts should be made in this field.

* The figures are taken from ‘Education of Girls and Women in India’, Govt. of India, Bureau of Education Publication, p. 120, 1952.

CHAPTER XXIII

WORKERS' EDUCATION IN INDIA

LENIN A POINTER :

"Politics is beyond the scope of an illiterate person", Lenin said, "he must first be taught the alphabet".¹ This observation of Lenin aroused mass enthusiasm and zeal in Soviet Russia and was responsible for creating "the Battle Front for a Literate Factory". Democracy to be strong and effective, has to be built by the working people who form the majority. As Lenin once observed, "our idea is that a State is strong by the consciousness of the masses. It is strong when the masses know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously".²

GENERAL PICTURE :

When illiteracy is widely prevalent provision of educational facilities for workers and their children becomes more or less a social service—an incumbent on the State. Even as it is, the number of Industrial workers is expected to rise four-fold by about 1965-76 according to the projected estimates of perspective planning as a result of the Five-Year Plans. The anticipated industrial expansion is based on estimated, though limited transfer of population from agriculture to industrial occupations. Much of this additional labour force, drawn from rural areas, would involve certain difficult problems of adjustment—social adjustment under urban conditions of work with different, social and economic environments. The position becomes still complicated, under existing conditions, where the majority of the working classes is largely illiterate and backward.

1. Quoted by H. Zinovyev and A. Pleshakova in 'How Illiteracy was wiped out in the USSR', Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow—p. 7.

2. Ibid, p. 7.

At present, in the Plan era, the emphasis is on rapid industrial expansion, which means accelerated production in Industries. The tempo of this phase would depend largely on the quickness with which the workers are able to acquire new industrial skills and techniques. It is here where a lack of general education, apart from a technical one, and ignorance added, constitute a great bottleneck for achieving the expected goal. Therefore, things as they stand, make it difficult to impart training of a requisite nature to the workers, to acquire the needed skills and techniques.

PURPOSES OF WORKERS' EDUCATION :

(i) Removal of illiteracy—the struggle against illiteracy and lack of culture should be made the cause of the working masses.

(ii) Ability to acquire industrial skills and techniques—the ability to acquire skills and training in such acquisition is difficult and expensive without a good foundation of general education.

(iii) Development of cultural life and raising their standard of living—this depends on a well-conceived, co-ordinated and integrated programme of activities for workers.

(iv) to know how to form their own organisations—to consider and take action on their own problems, including provision of welfare facilities at their places of work.

(v) to extend workers' participation in improving their working conditions—this depends on the development of their capacities through education.

If productivity is the yardstick to measure the work and success of industrial workers, then, it would be wise to look upon 'adult or social education' as an essential instrument to achieve the goal, which would in turn call for whole hearted support, and participation of all workers in the new movement. This can become a reality only when we realize that we need "a more productive, better informed and vigilant population".

NATURE OF WORKERS' EDUCATION—A NEEDED PROGRAMME :

There is a need for special measure to make the worker realise, despite illiteracy, his position in the economy of the country, and what the country expects of him in its bid for advancement. Such a kind of education should enable the worker to play a full and effective role in the democratic processes behind the generation of healthy public opinion, which ultimately determines and supports public policy in its essentials.

Further, the content of the course should be such, that every worker is made to participate effectively in the organisational part of the work, and particularly in trade union activities. After all, the fundamental aim of workers' education is to develop 'healthy growth of unionism', which would not only secure but safeguard economic reward, social justice, security of service and sustain sufficient appreciation and incentives for work. The workers should be made to feel the need for developing strong, well-organized, well-informed trade unions, run on constructive and responsible lines, in the interest of workers and the country at large.

Such a scheme of Workers' Education, if well-conceived, should also be concerned with trade union methods and philosophy. The scheme should also aim at training the worker in the techniques of union organisation and management, and make him largely self-reliant in that field.

In the scheme of education for workers, the emphasis throughout should be, on a rational understanding of the circumstances in which the worker is placed, and the pressures and policies to which he is subjected, how these develop, how he himself by collective action, through his union, can smoothen the pressures and substantially contribute to the shaping of the policies, and how he should conduct himself through his Union as a mature citizen for the maximum good of the working classes, and the community as a whole.

SCHEME AT WORK :

The present scheme of Workers' Education is largely a result of the recommendations of the Ford Foundation Team (1957) and the modifications of the 15th Session of the Indian Labour Conference held in July 1957 at Delhi. They constitute the foundation of the Scheme which is now sponsored by the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment. The administration of the present scheme is entrusted with an autonomous body which is known as "The Central Board for Workers' Education", specially constituted by the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment. This Board is held responsible for the general policy of the entire scheme, allocation of funds placed at its disposal, setting standards for teachers and programmes, arranging the provision of materials, inspection and supervision of programmes conducted under its auspices. The Board is expected to encourage workers' education, stimulate trade unions and educational institutions to undertake workers' education programmes of an approved pattern, and standard by making financial grants. The Board consists of representatives of Central Organisations of workers who form the largest single group and among others, are the educational authorities, Government and employers.

In order to develop, strengthen the Board, a Research and Information Centre is also being set up under its auspices, whose primary functions will be at the early stages to provide educational materials for the field officers and workers under the scheme. Besides, a Demonstration Centre will also be attached to the Research Centre.

BASIC PRINCIPLE :

The Scheme under way, recognises certain basic principles, namely that trade unions have the main interest in workers' education, that in time the trade union movement should take over the responsibility for workers' education. With this end in view, the Central Board encourages the establishment of active educational departments within the national unions and federations. There is also provision, authorizing the Board to give grants-in-aid to trade

unions and other institutions for organising workers' education programmes.

WORKERS' EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT PRESENT :

The first stage in the scheme, is the training of organisers for field work, known as Education Officers. They are to be absorbed in the Boards' service after three months' training. They in turn are expected to train—selected workers from industries in batches. These trained workers are known as Workers-teachers. This kind of a training programme will continue throughout the year, each centre turning out about 75 to 100 trained worker-teachers in a year. Usually, the applications for admission to the Training Course are channelled through trade unions. Regular refresher courses are also organised for worker-teachers and education officers.

The worker-teachers after their period of training, go back to their places of work and conduct similar programmes for their colleagues, outside the working hours. For these unit level classes, the employers are expected to provide certain basic amenities; a nominal remuneration of Rs. 25/- per mensem is paid to the worker-teacher for additional work. In this work, assistance is obtained from the education officers and the Regional Director in securing close supervision, demonstration and advice.

The programmes are of a varied nature, covering short-term courses, single session conferences, part-time classes, and full-time courses. The content of the Course has much to do with instilling trade union consciousness, purposes, functions and administration of trade unions, and conduct of union-management relations. The aim is also to widen the workers' understanding of public affairs and deepen their interest in it, as also to create the necessary mental atmosphere favourable to the evolution of leadership from among the ranks of workers. "In short, the programmes are designed to ensure the development of the workers into a mature individual and a responsible and reasonably well-informed and intelligent citizen".

COMMUNICATION MEDIA EMPLOYED :

In as much as the majority of workers are either illiterates or semi-literates, the methods of teaching, to bring forth the desirable results have to be necessarily psychological—simple but effective. 'Dry as dust' methods of regular lectures may not prove rewarding since the workers, who are practical-minded may not evince any interest in such learning. Therefore, it is in fitness of things that effective techniques such as, group discussions, role-play, exhibition, dramatization, films, skits, group-singing, use of pictorial diagrams, charts, simple illustrated pamphlets, conducting seminars, debates, and lectures, etc. are employed. It is a good feature, that lectures or talks are, as far as possible kept at the barest minimum and greater stress is being laid on modern methods involving group participation. Objectivity, and flexibility are maintained while imparting instructions.

RUSSIAN EXAMPLE—A POINTER TO INDIA :

The Writer would venture a few suggestions in regard to improving the existing programme of workers' education in the country based on the Russian example :

1. Evening Tea Parties—organisation of such parties for illiterate workers followed by explanatory work of a suitable nature.

2. Bonuses for 'Star Pupils'—giving bonuses to 'Star pupils' and rewarding them in turn with excursion tickets, accommodation passes for holiday homes, theatre tickets and subscription to certain useful newspapers, etc.

3. Organising 'shock party groups', paying social calls, etc.—explanatory work of a character that technological progress and assimilation of new methods of production would require a higher cultural level and a semi-literate or illiterate worker would not expect to cope with his job. Shock party groups, consisting of special committees, would keep track of all illiterate and semi-literate people.

4. 'Campaigns for Culture'—printing serious and satirical articles, ditties and cartoons about the cultural campaign

regularly in popular newspapers and magazines, devote wholly to the anti-illiteracy drive. Special commissions for the elimination of illiteracy—they were called ‘cultural campaign headquarters’—which issued bulletins and one-day newspapers.

The Soviet example of asking poets to compose slogan in verse is illustrated below for emulation in India :

“May ignorance perish!
Long live A B C !
Trade Unions,
Combat illiteracy !
“Workers and peasants,
You must understand,
Illiteracy weighs
Like a Yoke on the land!”⁴

Another illustration which may prove equally useful is given below :⁵

“An illiterate person has hundreds of enemies: epidemics, hunger, disorder, humiliation. A literate person has millions of friends ; good, useful books”—says this leaflet, issued by the Perm Gybernia Extraordinary Committee for the Elimination of Illiteracy in 1920.

5. Evening Schools.

6. Correspondence Schools—at both primary and Secondary levels. Workers’ high schools—special secondary schools that prepare workers for higher educational establishments.

7. Every industrial sector having its own base, its own higher educational establishment, and every such higher educational establishment, in its turn, having a reservoir—the workers’ High school—to nurture it. The workers’ High schools play an important role in the proletarianisation of higher educational establishments and creation of a new, Soviet

4. M. Zinovyev and A. Pleashakova: *HOW ILLITERACY WAS WIPED OUT IN THE USSR.*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, p. 51.

5. *Ibid*, p. 17.

intelligentsia. "Year-in and year-out, through the medium of Universities and Colleges, they reinforced industry with young specialists born and bred by the working class".⁶ In the Soviet, hundreds of thousands of workers have acquired education going all the way through from a literacy school to a University viz. the workers' 'high school'. It may be interesting in this context to recall that "the path to the Industrial Academy by way "of a workers' High school was travelled, among others, by N. S. Khrushchev, eminent Soviet Communist Party Leader and Statesman. A fitter in the past, he is to-day — Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers"⁷, (now displaced).

8. Apart from a large number of adult schools, there is a well-organised network of extra-scholastic education—newspapers, books, radio, and cinema penetrate most remote corners of the Soviet Union to promote culture among millions of people. "Elimination of illiteracy among adults, introduction of compulsory education for children, growth of cultural and educational establishments, and creation of a large network of vocational training schools (from factory apprenticeship schools to higher educational establishments)—all these were major victories scored by the Soviet people in promoting Socialist culture".⁸

What is needed in India to-day, if we are to storm the bastion of knowledge, is to wage an unrelenting war against illiteracy and lack of culture which should be made the case of the working masses.

The emphasis, in the campaign for culture shall be on "knowledge to the working people". How this struggle against illiteracy of workers can be waged in this country can be learnt from the Russian example, illustrated in the form of a dialogue below :⁹—

"In 1932 the Dnieper Hydropower Station Construction Site was visited by a group of Italian Scientists. One of them,

6. Ibid, p. 93.

7. Ibid, p. 93.

8. Ibid, p. 94.

a Professor, had the following interesting talk with a Section Chief.

“How many of your men are studying” ? the Italian asked ?

“Ten thousand.”

“And how many workers have you ?”

“Ten thousand.”

“Then who does the work ?”

“Those who study.”

The brief dialogue, reproduced above, reflects one of the important traits engendered in Soviet people by Soviet Power—the mass urge to study. Will this thing happen in our country ?

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

OBJECT OF EDUCATION :

Since the advent of Independence, our country has been facing challenges on many sides,—political and economic, social and cultural. In this context, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's object of education is 'the means by which the youth is trained to serve the cause of drastic social and economic changes'.¹ According to him, 'nations become back numbers if they do not reckon with the development of the age'.² He assigns a role to the youths of the country, which is in keeping with the time spirit, which is fundamental.

Dr. Radhakrishnan is not a mere idealist in education. Like John Dewey, he does not lose sight of realism or otherwise known as 'pragmatism' in educational philosophy. What is the nature of his pragmatism? To put it in his own words :

"The industrial growth of our country requires a large number of scientists, technicians and engineers. The rush in our Universities for courses in Science and Technology is natural. Men trained in these practical courses help to increase productivity, agricultural and industrial. They also help to find employment easily. To help the students to earn a living is one of the functions of education, *arthakari ka vidya*".³

His stress is always on the development of an 'integrated personality of the individual'. He enunciates his view that

1. Occasional Speeches and Writings (October, 1952—January, 1956) by S. Radhakrishnan, The Publications Division,* Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, First Series, May, 1956, p. 58.

2. S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

any satisfactory system of education should aim at a balanced growth of the individual and insist on both knowledge and wisdom, *gnanam vignana—sahitam*. It should not only train the intellect but bring grace into the heart of man. Wisdom is more easily gained through the study of literature, philosophy, religion. They interpret the higher laws of the Universe.⁴ He pleads for a general philosophy or attitude of life, without which it is quite likely that our minds would be confused, and we would suffer also from greater setbacks, namely greed, pusillanimity, anxiety and defeatism. He scents the greatest danger from 'mental slums'. In this regard he observes :⁵

"Mental slums are more dangerous to mankind than material slums".

CHARACTER TRAINING:

Training in education of character, is very essential to Radhakrishnan. He lays the greatest emphasis on 'character training'. For instance, he points out, 'character is destiny. Character is that on which the destiny of a nation is built. One cannot have a great nation with men of small character. If we want to build a great nation, we must try to train a large number of young men and women who have character. We must have young men and women who look upon others as the living images of themselves as our *Sastras* have so often declared'.⁶

According to him, integrity of character is essential in all walks of life, be it in public life or in student life. He never fails to emphasise that, without purity of character, a nation cannot attain great heights. As an instance in point, he thoughtfully observes :⁷

"We cannot climb the mountain when the very ground at our feet is crumbling. When the very basis of our

4. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 60.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

6. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan volume I, p. 54.

7. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., pp. 54—55.

structure is shaky, how can we reach the heights which we have set before ourselves ?”

Dr. Radhakrishnan’s call for the need for integrity of character in men and women of the country to-day, echoes the spirit with which the newly functioning network of ‘Sadachar Committees’ are set in operation in the various States of the country,— a nation-wide purge of all kinds of impurities in the day-to-day administration of the country. In this connection, Dr. Radhakrishnan’s appeal, particularly to the young men and women, who are graduating to-day is:⁸

“Mother India expects of you that your lives should be clean, noble and dedicated to selfless work”.

In a different context, speaking about character, Radhakrishnan applies the maxim that ‘Character is destiny’ to individuals as well as to nations. He rightly observes :⁹

“We cannot build rightly with wrong materials. More than your intellectual ability or technical skill, what makes you valuable to society is your devotion to a great cause”.

Applying the principle of character on a national scale, he opines that ‘our future destiny as a nation depends on our spiritual strength rather than upon our material wealth : *nayam atma balahinena labhyah*. The goal of perfection cannot be achieved by the weak, not the weak in body, but the weak in spirit, *atmo-nistha-janita-viryahinena*. The greatest asset of a nation is the spirit of its people. If we break the spirit of a people, we imperil their future; if we develop the power of spirit, our future will be bright’.¹⁰

CONCEPT OF EDUCATION:

Though Dr. Radhakrishnan does not swear by any definition of education, in the sense of being rigid, but yet he comes very nearer a definition of education on a quite number of occasions, in the course of his several speeches

8. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 55.

9. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 65.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

and writings. For instance, in the course of one of his addresses to UNESCO General Conference : Eighth Session, Montevideo,¹¹ he reveals a glimpse of it when he says :

“Education, to be complete, must be humane, it must include not only the training of the intellect but the refinement of the heart and the discipline of the spirit. No education can be regarded as complete if it neglects the heart and the spirit”.

In the course of the same address, he pointed out that ‘In UNESCO we should make fundamental education, to youths and adults, to all of us, base itself on the twin principles of truth and love. Reverence for all life should be created in the minds and hearts of the young’.¹² Thus it becomes evident, on a little reflection, that, this emphasis in education is on the human aspects of ‘Think true, live, love’, which would rather constitute the true spirit and essence of religion, at the same time informing education also.

HUMANISM IN EDUCATION:

His appeal to the human element becomes more vivid when he asserts rather boldly that “no nation in this world can hold its place of primacy in perpetuity. What counts is the moral contribution we make to human welfare. Let us, therefore, try and develop the qualities of charity in judgment and compassion for people who are suffering. If we adopt such an approach, the tensions of the world will diminish rapidly”.¹³

He is not unmindful of the need for ‘education for democracy’, in the context of a new India, born of a revolution, essentially peaceful and non-violent, and pledged to democracy,—education aimed at making boys and girls useful citizens of our new democracy. It is but fitting when he observes, ‘In a Welfare State, our aim should be not only to provide the elementary necessities of food, clothing and

11. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. I, p. 142.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

13. S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 142.

shelter to all our citizens but to make them live as brothers even though they may belong to different races, creeds and provinces'.¹⁴ In his address to the Birla Education Trust, he draws attention to the fact that 'the future progress of the country depends on accomplishing in a few decades the work of centuries. The essential means of bringing about a new society is education'.¹⁵ He commends the initiative on the part of private agencies, apart from the attempts of the Government, to reconstruct education in a generous, humane and liberal spirit,—education for democracy, for the creation of a Unitary State to which local particularisms and centrifugal ambitions are subordinated, as it should be.

Radhakrishnan, being a philosopher, always strikes a note of 'sympathy, tolerance and love' as the key to all human understanding. It becomes evident when he says :

"The cause of democracy is the cause of the human individual, of the free spirit of man with its spontaneous inspiration and endeavour. Every man whose thoughts and feelings are not silted up has his own inner possession, which belongs to him, alone, his holy shrine, which he has won for himself. When an individual is trained to appreciate his own holy being, he will develop a chastity of mind and spirit and approach with inner trembling another's sanctuary. Intolerance is basically unchastity. If we do not give this spiritual direction to our education, it fails in its purpose.

Saksaro Vaparitave raksaso bhavati dhruvam.

"Those who are learned but do not possess love they really become demonic. They will be characterized by intellectual arrogance, spiritual crassness and coldness of heart".¹⁶

BASIC VALUES:

Dr. Radhakrishnan's unique distinction as an educationist of outstanding status, lies in his fervent appeal of 'respect .

14. S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., pp. 381—312.

15. S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 380.

16. S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 382.

for the basic values of spirit', which alone according to him, is 'the only antidote to the distempers of our society, social, economic and political'. We are awakened to the basic values of spirit of his allusion, when he points out that 'we must recognize that there is something in man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. If sheer confusion dominates the scene and we live in an age of anxiety and greed, it is because our training has been one-sided. It is wrong to assume that the only means required for the betterment of mankind are more and more of scientific discovery and technological improvement'.¹⁷

He assigns a high role to the classics of the world, the study of which, according to him, will help us 'grow in our spirit'. In his opinion, the basis of democracy is the central principle of all religions, that there is an intimate connection between the mind of man and the moving spirit of the universe. This principle of democracy must become an effective faith. In our educational institutions, we can train our young men and women in the spirit of democracy. We must increase wealth, reduce inequalities and raise the standards of the common man. Let the bright image of a new India where we will be free socially and economically break through the fogs of fear and ignorance, self-interest and superstition'.¹⁸

What is 'true education' according to Radhakrishnan? To quote his own words :¹⁹

"True education needs conversation and debate, exchange of opinions and thoughts with friends with whom we can speak and listen easily, sympathetically and without fear. But are the opportunities for these adequate?"

EDUCATIONAL INADEQUACIES :

He again points out the inadequacy of the educational institutions of the country in fulfilling the above require-

17. S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 72.

18. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 72.

19. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 64.

ments, which he has not failed to do, as Chairman of the University Education Commission, in his Report to the Government of India, which to-day stands as the monumental study of the problems of Education (Higher) in India. To quote Dr. Radhakrishnan again : ²⁰

“Living conditions in Universities leave much to be desired. . . . Again, there is no adequate provision for games and other corporate activities. There is no reason why students who are physically fit should not be encouraged to join the National Cadet Corps in larger numbers. Membership of the Corps fosters habits of discipline, team work and dignity of labour”.

That he is keenly sensitive to the most important of all problems, “the education of the youth of the country” is too well-known to every one. He used to regret to say that ‘the schemes of development adopted by the Centre and the States do not pay adequate attention to this most important of all problems’,—the education of the youth of the country. How vivid does it become when he puts it as such : ²¹

“Our whole experiment in democracy will suffer if education is not given top priority. The future leadership of the country will be imperilled if University education is allowed to deteriorate for lack of financial support”.

ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS :

He assigns no mean role to educational institutions of the country in its ‘nation-building activity’. What is the kind of role that he ascribes to such institutions ? Here is a glimpse : ²²

“A nation is built in its educational institutions. We have to train our youth in them. We have to impart

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 64—65.

21. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan. Vol. I, p. 65.

22. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, p. 69.

to them the tradition of the future. Through all the complexities and diversities of race and religion, language and geography, the forces which have made our people into a nation and which alone can keep them one are being shaped. These do not belong to the material sphere. The Unity is not one of physical geography, it belongs to the realm of ideas. It is a matter for men's minds and hearts. We must therefore guard ourselves against separatist tendencies of language, religion and province"

APPEAL FOR NATIONAL UNITY :

His appeal for national unity has been profound in many of his speeches. As an instance in point, it may be mentioned here :

"Political freedom which we won at much cost and sacrifice is only an opportunity. It is not a fulfilment. If we are to develop a strong democracy, political, social and economic, it is necessary for us to work hard and work unitedly. The ideal imposes on us a sacred responsibility. Men are not made democratic by the mere formulation of ideals in the constitution. They are not made good by mere exhortation. Great ideals of justice, equality, fraternity and freedom which we have inscribed in our Constitution must be woven into the social fabric. There is much evidence of low morale, dissatisfaction and discontent among people, all leading to serious slackness. We must overcome the spiritual sickness which seems to be enfeebling our community. If we do not change our minds, we cannot change anything".²³

He never fails to drive home the point that 'Dharma or virtue is not a cloak which we occasionally put on. It should be ingrained in our lives, in our thoughts, words and deeds'. He deprecates the separatist, tribal, clannish and provincial tendencies which are on the increase to-day, under which influence we are tempted to become angry and violent. In

23. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., pp. 68—69.

this connection he pertinently observes by way of a note of caution that 'violence and democracy are inconsistent with each other. For good Government we need selfless leadership, honest and efficient civil service, disciplined soldiers and policemen, skilled workers and peasants. It is in educational institutions that we can train these'.²⁴

While making such an appeal, he does not take for granted the unity of India. It is really something which has to be built up systematically. To know it in his own words :

"National discipline is the way to national unity and coherence. We must preserve unity and democratic institutions. For achieving these ends a massive educational effort is necessary. Development in agriculture and industry is essential but more essential is the shaping of the minds and hearts of our people. The future of the country needs work, organization, efficiency, sacrifice, from each one of us, the highest and lowest. In institutions like this we should be taught to subordinate narrow and parochial feelings to the general good of the Community".²⁵

MAN-MAKING EDUCATION :

His stress in education is on 'the making of true human beings'. How to produce such types of persons? 'We do not wish to train mere specialists and technicians but civilized human-beings. We do want engineers, scientists, teachers but they should not cease to be human and humane. Right education will impart not only knowledge and skill but also humanity and virtue. We cannot overlook the need for these when we remember the elusive and vulnerable character of youth'.²⁶

In such a 'man-making education', the role of culture is very significant. Culture, according to Radhakrishnan, is

24. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S Radhakrishnan, Third Series, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, Third Series, 1963, p. 95.

25. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 94.

26. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 95.

'progressive subjugation of the animal in man. Man should function as an animal-tamer. The great prophets teach the courage of suffering without inflicting pain, of dying without killing. We need loving kindness, universal charity'.²⁷

Speaking about culture on a different occasion, he observes :²⁸

"The more Indian culture changes, the more it remains the same. The power of the Indian spirit has sustained us through difficult times. It is the intangible that gives a nation its character and its vitality. This may seem unimportant or even irrelevant under the pressure of daily life. Our capacity for survival in spite of perils from outside matched only by our own internal feuds and dissensions is due to our persistent adherence to this spirit. If our young men are to live more abundantly, they should enter more fully into the experience and ideals of the race, they should be inspired in their minds and hearts by the great ideas enshrined in our culture".

STUDENT UNREST ;

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, attributes the increasing unrest among students in our Universities, not a little to the 'inattention to our culture'. While deprecating the lawless activities of students in educational institutions by their acts of defiance of authority, doing national disservice and imperilling the future of the country, he considers that 'they are traitors to the past and enemies of the future'. Placed in such a situation, how would he improve the atmosphere in Universities ? His thoughtful remark is 'Students are not trained to approach life's problems with the fortitude, self-control, and sense of balance which our new conditions demand. Without this disciplined enthusiasm for great causes, students become a danger to themselves and

27. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 101.

28. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. I, p. 62.

to Society as a whole. This approach is encouraged by study of our classics. I hope that Universities will pay greater attention to this side of education'.²⁹

EDUCATION FOR A WORLD COMMUNITY :

His conception of a new world order is the growth of a 'world community', towards the building of which he would call every one to work with all the strength and capacity we possess. In the process of building up such a world community, Dr. Radhakrishnan, sees much scope in the classics, the study of which he encourages very much. In his view, 'all the classics of the world, in whatever language they may be written, belong to the human race as a whole. In these days when different cultures, religions and peoples are thrown together, to qualify ourselves for citizenship in the new world which is emerging, we must adopt a proper, tolerant attitude towards other people's ideas and ideals'.³⁰ In this connection, he gives a place of very high importance to Sanskrit as a subject of cultural studies. 'The culture associated with Sanskrit gives us a view, of religion, which is not exclusive but universal, a kind of religion which is most suited to modern conditions'.³¹

VARIOUS CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION TOWARDS A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING :

President Radhakrishnan, has interpreted the term 'education' in different ways at different times. On one occasion, speaking about education, he maintains that 'education makes for freedom, true freedom, not slavery of mind or subservience to authority but intellectual courage and integrity of spirit'.³² In order that these qualities be produced or developed in the men and women of tomorrow, a new outlook may be required, warranting

29. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., pp. 62—63.

30. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1963, p. 184.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

32. *Ibid.*

the new changes—since time is a great innovator. In this context, Dr. Radhakrishnan's emphasis is on developing the 'scientific spirit, the questioning mood, impatience with things as they are, and the urge to delve into the hidden and the mysterious in life and nature'. He goes a little further and observes with vigour :

"A lively development and use of intellectual curiosity, imaginative power, technical skill, acceptance of goals that stretch one's talent and energy to the uttermost extent and the simultaneous rejection of all clichés of thought, sterile styles and forms and social manners that hamper individual aims and efforts, these are the characteristics of the young person who is anxious to defend his individuality against the ever-present and corrupting force of habit and tradition and social pressures for conformity. All this is possible with single minded devotion".³³

What he hopes for is that 'we must attain that increase in purity and concentration of attention that will lead to more meaningful perception.

On a different occasion, he advocates a 'balanced view of education'. In this regard he adds in his own powerful way :³⁴

"It is now increasingly recognized that a balanced view of education should be developed. In addition to intellectual training, imagination should be fostered and the emotions refined. The inquisitive mind, the intuitive heart, the sensitive spirit and the searching conscience should be developed. In this age of science and technology, we should remember that the tree of life is something quite distinct from a grid of steel. Even as we try to remove poverty by the application of science and technology, poverty of mind requires to be removed by fine arts. . . . Material poverty is not the only source of unhappiness. We should serve not the power interests of the community

33. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 187.

34. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 191.

but its human interests. Aesthetic and spiritual values contribute to the making of a full man, man's creative side is nourished by art. In many are gaiety and laughter, the lust of the flaming life and the lure of the flashing eye".

ART AND CULTURE :

He holds aloft the place of 'art and culture' in the life of a nation. Rightly does he observe that, 'a nation, if it is to retain its position among the highest, should contribute effectively to the growth of art and culture'. "Arts", he pleads, "enrich the human spirit and enlarge our capacity for the enjoyment of beauty. They please our ears, the senses and eyes, feed our imagination and stir our emotions. They alter profoundly our consciousness of the world and our attitude towards it. Arts are not merely the means for entertainment ; this is an abuse of its power and an insult to the character and intelligence of the people. The people should be educated to appreciate the higher forms of music and dance. We should not merely give what the public want, but educate them to want the true and the beautiful."³⁵ These days, we find everywhere demoralisation of public tastes, and in such a situation, the awakening of moral and spiritual values in them through 'true art and culture' is the need of the hour, which should not be lost sight of, those in authority, particularly in *enthusing the public to want* the 'true and the beautiful'. This might go a long way in averting the danger 'of our losing our concern for moral and spiritual values as Radhakrishnan would put it.

MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA :

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, does not ignore the importance or the role of 'mass media of communication', as one of the effective agents of public education. His own observation is that "all films are educational directly or indirectly. They are the great instruments of public education."³⁶ He envisages a new function or an ideal responsibility on the

35. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., pp. 180—190.

36. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 207.

part of the film world as far as educative values are concerned. He is particular that 'the film producers should aim at 'excellence, improvement of standards'. He notes that 'we should not stir passions and hatreds but spread a knowledge of right ideals'.³⁷ This is of course an ideal conception of the role of film producers. But to what extent, the film world can be trusted upon in the matter of fulfilling these ambitions, would mean a keen sense of responsibility on the part of the film producers,—a keen sense of social awareness, in relation to moral and spiritual values.

Dr. Radhakrishnan, does look forward to a moralizing influence of the children's films in the context of our building a new India. He depicts their role as follows :³⁸

"Children's films especially should not dwell on the lurid, the brutal and the decadent. They have a demoralizing effect on their minds. Films depicting the marvels of science and the adventures of man in space-flights will be exciting. They not only excite but exalt. They give us pride in the wondrous mind of man".

He is for the films teaching, therefore, 'a new way of life, a way which will change the minds and hearts of our people'. Why he makes such a strong plea is, because, as is well known, 'in our society there is a general decline in good manners, in dignity of behaviour, in tolerance. Our education has been sufficient to remove the positive directives in our life. It has not been able to give something in their place. There is a vacuum created in men's minds. That is why many of us are restless and neurotic. The void at the centre should be filled. Films should give us solace, refreshment and relaxation'.³⁹

With same vigour, Dr. Radhakrishnan upholds, exhibition of children's Art, which discloses to us the great artistic possibilities which our children have,—almost all children whose imagination is not inhibited. It is his considered

37. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 238.

38. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 208.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

opinion that such exhibitions—exhibitions of Children's Art, would come as a great relief from the generality of rightful boredom of class work where not unoften they are taught things by weary, absent-minded teachers. Here when they paint they feel free and express themselves freely. They surrender themselves to spontaneity. Children have an unsophisticated outlook and have a great love for colour, movement, rhythm and music'.⁴⁰ As regards children, he is particular that their impulses should be made to articulate freely. Fully understanding child psychology, he remarks that 'we should not kill their curiosity or warp their emotions'. Full of love and affection for children, Dr. Radhakrishnan boldly asserts that 'the future belongs to children. Our great leaders, Gandhiji, Tagore, were fond of children. So is Nehru to-day'.⁴¹

PREVAILING IMBALANCES IN EDUCATION :

According to Rashtrapathi Radhakrishnan, the prevalent system of education is suffering from an imbalance which needs correction. What is the imbalance which needs such a correction. What is the imbalance like ? 'The prevalent system of education suffered from two serious defects, that it was mainly literary in character and that it ignored the national tradition. It is relatively inexpensive to train students in arts, law and Commerce, but it costs a great deal to train them in Sciences, Engineering and Technology which are essential for the development of our resources and raising our standards of living.'⁴² When he speaks of 'national education', 'it does not mean that subjects like Physics and chemistry, engineering and technology, change with the boundaries of nations. It means that there is a national heritage, a tradition of values into which the students should be initiated'.⁴³ He goes a step further when he says that 'India is not a geographical abstraction but a living spirit.

40. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 200.

41. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 201.

42. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Second Series, p. 74.

43. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 75.

The outlook associated with this country has been a spiritual one, that there are higher laws of the universe than those studied by sciences and technology, that the world is more than that what we see, feel, touch and measure'.⁴⁴ Thus it becomes clear, that, Dr. Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the term 'national education' is rather liberal and not narrowly parochial savouring 'chauvinism'.

He does not favour narrow specialization, which is rather the growing trend in several educational institutions. His view is that 'no one can be said to be truly educated if his knowledge is limited to one special branch. The evils of specialization can be combated only by a course in what is now called general education'.⁴⁵ It may be noted in this connection, that some Universities in the country have already introduced such 'general education' courses, though there has not been a vigorous drive in this regard.

At a time when the force of secularism, let loose by a combination of material needs and scientific achievement, is posing a serious threat to human values, education is quite likely to misguide us if it is lacking in a sense of purpose. Rightly therefore, does Radhakrishnan, sensing the danger inherent in the situation we are facing to-day, apprehends in his own characteristic way : 'There is a great deal of intellectual and technical skill but the ethical and spiritual vitality is at a low ebb. The mind of man, ever young and eager, though standing on earth as on a footstool, stretches, out its hold into the stars. There is nothing wrong about science ; what is wrong is the use we make of it. Education should give us a purpose. Man's completeness results from the pursuit of truth and its application to improve human life, the influence of what is beautiful in nature, man and art, and spiritual development and its embodiment in ethical principles. Coarseness of feeling, darkness of mind and the very casual way in which we inflict cruelties—all these indicate inward emptiness'.⁴⁶ By emphasising the qualities of

44. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, p. 75.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 74—75.

46. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, P. 182.

‘civic conscience, public spirit’ and enlightened leadership’, he infuses a sense of purpose in education. He is particular that educational institutions should be interested in producing ‘not only safe men but men who have the courage to dare to seek truth, create beauty and be free. They should have the power to break through the vicious circle which now threatens to end the world’.

RESTORE TRUTHS OF THE SPIRIT :

His constant appeal is to restore the truths of spirit to the central place in the minds of men. ‘They must transform us, give us liberality, understanding, freedom. The minds and hearts of people require to be altered. This depends on the perceptions and ideas of men and women, on the moral judgments of the community, on the inner compulsions which control us. We must train not only the intellect but bring grace into the heart of man, *tejasvinazadhita-masru*. If we are truly spiritual, we will cut off with a drastic hand so much that has come down to us in the name of religion which is repugnant to our mind and heart’.⁴⁷ It is his trite observation in the conflicting situation to-day that ‘if inspite of the great knowledge we have accumulated, we are still in a perilous state, in an unhappy predicament, it is because we are indifferent to the higher laws of this Universe’.⁴⁸

While President Radhakrishnan upholds great traditions,—elements making for greatness, he does not encourage those forces of ‘reaction’, narrow-mindedness and disunion. He is firm in saying that ‘we keep a tradition alive not by repeating what has been said but by meeting our problems in the same spirit in which the old seers met theirs. Our respect for tradition should not harden into an abandonment of independent thought and an unquestioning submission to authority. It is our duty to cast off whatever hampers our sense of justice even though it may be venerable with the history of ages or consecrated by familiarity’.⁴⁹

47. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Second Series, p. 79.

48. S. Radhakrishnan; op. cit., p. 78,

49. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit. p. 192.

BUILDING UP INTERNAL DEFENCES :

Addressing the Delhi University Convocation (December 1953), Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, strikes a similar note, regarding the need for 'independent thinking and building up of 'internal defences in the minds of men. In this regard, his remarks run as follows :⁵⁰

"Independent thinking is not encouraged in our world to-day. When we see a cinema, we think very fast to keep up with rapid changes of scene and action. This rapidity which the cinema gives its audiences and demands from them has its own effect on the mental development. If we are to be freed from the debilitating effects and the nervous strain of modern life, if we are to be saved from the assaults which beat so insistently on us from the screen and the radio, from the yellow press and demagoguery, defences are to be built in the minds of men, enduring interests are to be implanted in them".⁵¹

CORRECTING CURRICULAR IMBALANCES :

In his scheme of studies, the prevalent imbalances in the curricula get corrected and he is cautious enough always, to stress the values of both humanities and sciences, without altogether ignoring either the one or the other, as some narrow-minded bigots in education do very often. It will be worthwhile to quote his views as regards these :"⁵¹

"We must learn to read great classics which deal with really important questions affecting the life and destiny of human race. We must think for ourselves about these great matters but thinking for oneself does not mean thinking in a vacuum, unaided, all alone. We need help from others, living or dead. We need help from the great of all ages, the poets, the philosophers, the creative thinkers, the artists. Whereas in sciences we can be helped only by the contemporaries, in the humanities, help comes

50. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan First Series, pp. 60—61.

51. Radhakrishnan: op. cit. p. 61.

from the very great, to whatever age, and race they may belong”.

In his first Jadavpur University Convocation address, (March 1956) he pleaded to the graduates :⁵²

“You will be able to take your share in its great enterprises, if your University, loyal to its origin, has given you not only technical efficiency; but moral judgement and a sense of values built for us by the great achievement of our ancestors.”

CLEARING UP ‘MENTAL SLUMS’ ;

In as much as physical slums have to be cleared, he feels that ‘mental slums’ also need dusting up. According to him, ‘education is the means by which we can tidy up our minds, acquire information, as well as a sense of values. Education should give us not only elements of general knowledge or technical skills but also impart to us that bent of mind, that attitude of reason, that spirit of democracy which will make us responsible citizens of our country. A true democracy is a community of citizens differing from one another but all bound to a common goal’.⁵³

FREEMAN IN KNOWLEDGE :

While democratisation of education is good, he does not tolerate the curbing of the individuality in men and women. In a democracy, the State primarily exists for the good of its members and their real good consists in the development of their ‘inward resources’. He views with alarm that ‘unfortunately, in the new society we are building the individual human being is subjected to the levelling impact of standardized emotions. The human being is treated as a means and not an end in itself. Our differences are flattened out, our attitudes become uniform. In the name of a questionable future and distant good, we are asked to subordinate to it our impulses and emotions. We forget that the individual’s

52. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Second Series, p. 88.

53. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 185.

welfare is the end of the State'.⁵⁴ With all his love for individuality, his passion for democracy does not cease to be intense. It is evident in his observation that 'Democracy is an invitation to a new life where each individual feels himself to be a responsible being, who can shape the future of the society to which he belongs. By means* of democratic political arrangements, we should strive to release the creative energies of men. We cannot afford to waste a single talent, starve a single young body or stunt a single young mind'.⁵⁵ It is his firm conviction that the free man believes in knowledge as a guide to action, in beauty, in friendship'.

RECOVERY OF SPIRITUAL MOORINGS:

In a society, which is fast losing its spiritual moorings, in a democratic community, where all men are both the rulers and the ruled, what is his concept of education? "Education", he says, "must be widespread and this education need not be only literary or academic. We must develop goodwill, patience and forbearance. In these days of increasing specialization and growing mental ailments a recovery of faith in the ultimate spiritual values is essential. It is the only way to develop one's inward resources. I am glad you lay stress on religious education. What is seen on the surface of history is the fruit of a deep-rooted plant, drawing its sustenance from hidden sources of spirit. If the roots of a tree, get dried up, it cannot yield any fruit".⁵⁶

EDUCATION—A SEARCH FOR INTEGRATION :

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's view of education is not purely academic but dynamic and integral. He looks upon education as a 'search for integration, for wholeness'. His concept of education must include 'the development of man's spiritual powers and help to build a harmonious, self-confident personality'. Judged according to his standards,

54. op. cit.

55. S. Radhakrishnan: op- cit., p. 86.

56. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 87.

where do we stand to-day ? The term 'education' has a broader and liberal connotation, in his view. Looked at from his own angle:⁵⁷

"Education aims at making us into civilized human beings conscious of our moral and social obligations. We must know the world in which we live, physical, organic and social. We must have an idea of the general plan of the universe and the search for truth. When we attain truth our burdens are lightened and our difficulties are diminished. It lights up our pathway with the radiance of joy".

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION :

What is the Rashtrapathi's attitude towards children and children's education ? As we all know, children are the promise of the future in any country of the world. They must be trained in order to reveal the treasure that is in the human soul. He notes with despair :⁵⁸

"Unfortunately in our schools we look upon children as mere raw stuff on which we can impose our unjust views through our powerful wills. We inject them with our views and make them as corrupt as we are. Children should understand what is natural, spontaneous, uncorrupt, sound, and reach harmony with themselves and objects in the world. The monstrous sin of pride makes us commit gross perversions in their nature. The child is unable to defy, to be Promethean, to create goals, to build worlds in conformity with what our moral sense knows to be eternal truths. We must free education from the chains of an evil past from its ignorance and errors. We must liberate the young from the blind despotism of the old. We must not destroy the right and power of self-direction. Coercion is evil. It destroys what is natural and sacred in the child, the capacity for

57. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, p. 128.

58. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 127.

thinking and acting according to what he knows to be true and good”.

At the primary level, education in the country to-day, is far from satisfactory, though there is universal, compulsory and free education, according to the Constitution. If the humanist ideal of actualization of his potentialities and the conquest of those distortions of his nature which are caused by his bondage to error and passion, is to be achieved, a new approach is required on the part of the teachers towards children,—a humane approach. Dr. Radhakrishnan is of the view that ‘if we do not respect the child’s personality but misunderstand it, he becomes sullen, rebellious, neurotic, stupid. Tragedies of the human heart result in callousness and crime. Causes of distemper lie within the mind’.⁵⁹

His views on children’s education are characterised by free-thinking and liberality of outlook, infused with an abundant touch of humanism. This becomes too clear when he says : “We must set free human capacity without imposing our views on it. We must release the talents of the children and help them to become what they are *in potentia*. It is the machine that constructs, it is the living spirit that creates. Song, dance and literature are creative activities”.⁶⁰ He holds the view that education should give the children not only intellectual stimulation but a purpose. We should not encourage them to think of situations as either black or white. We should not inject children with the poisons that have entered our bloodstream. We passed through two wars and are giving to the children as a possibility a war of utter annihilation. Children should be taught to be gentle, truthful and forbearing”.⁶¹ Looking at the problem of the integration of the nation as a step towards world integration, he is looking forward to the training of children of the country in ways that lead to national unity and world solidarity’. What an incisive insight he has of children’s minds when he observes that, ‘children are friendly, generous and eager to help one another. They are ready

59. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

60. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, p. 161.

61: *Ibid.*, p. 161.

to honour a stranger, a member of another nation, where he is worthy of respect. This is true nobility of heart'.⁶²

EDUCATION—A CAPACITY FOR DISCERNMENT :

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan makes a distinction between 'human development' and the acquisition of information or 'mechanical skills'. In order that one may not be misled, he points out that 'human development is not to be confused with the acquisition of mechanical skills or intellectual information. It is the development of the spirit in man'.⁶³ In a different context, he lays emphasis on the 'quality of discernment' as one of the aims of education.—"Education", he observes, "has for its aims not merely the acquisition of information but the capacity for discernment. Judgment is more important than cleverness. In our country to-day we have many men who are clever but not many who are upright. We should cultivate respect for integrity. We must weed out corruption and clean up the nation. Purity is essential in daily life and administration".⁶⁴

In his 'integral' conception of education, the stress is on the development of a 'balanced personality', in the making of which art and music are regarded as essential elements of education. "A balanced personality", he opines, "is possible if we sharpen the intellect, cultivate imagination and discipline our passions..... Insight, aesthetic sensibility, moral responsibility cannot be subsumed under the categories of science. The discipline of our nature is an essential part of education. The Jina is the conqueror ; Mahavira is the great hero ; *Vardha-Mana* is the ever growing. Growth is by discipline".⁶⁵

IDEALS FOR YOUTHS :

In his forceful plea for 'a man-making education in the context of our plan era, he sets forth certain ideals to the

62. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 162.

63. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Second Series, p. 127.

64. Occasional Speeches and Writings S. Radhakrishnan, Third series, p. 84.

65. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., pp. 84—85.

youths of the country. What is the nature of those ideals ? He exclaims :⁶⁶

“We should develop the spirit of inquiry and dedication to the pursuit of science and scholarship. We waste our years in College in trivialities and inanities. We are misled into participation in non-academic endeavours. We should instil into our youth zeal for the advancement of knowledge. We have enough material but it is not guided properly. We need education in character. We have to make good men..... They are the true wealth of the country”.

“Education”, Dr. Radhakrishnan contends, “should prepare us for a time when it will no longer be necessary to hate and to kill. Brotherhood is not a mere theory. It is a fact from which we cannot escape”.⁶⁷ That is why he stresses the importance of the development of the spirit of true democracy among the young, in the home, the school and the college, which are the forms of community life into which young men and women enter and where the social qualities essential for a new India require to be developed. He throws out a challenge in his characteristic way, when he says :⁶⁸

“If we twist the minds of the young out of shape, they will be a danger to society. The future of democracy in Asia depends on our willingness to submit to discipline, undergo personal sacrifice..... If India is to remain free, united and democratic, educational institutions should train people for freedom, not obedience, for unity and not localism, for democracy, not dictatorship. Our youth should have a sense of purpose”.

The above appeal by the Rashtrapathi is more or less a challenge at a time, when the whole nation is engaged in a vigorous drive for ‘emotional integration’.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

67. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third series, p. 159.

68. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 120.

AIM AT HIGHER STANDARDS :

He is quite aware of the fact that higher education is essential for health and progress of any nation. At a time when our problems are becoming bewilderingly complex, high standards in education require to be maintained.⁶⁹ How to maintain high standards ? Again, his forceful plea is that 'whatever subjects we study we should aim at excellence and commitment to truth. All scientists and scholars aim at these ideals'.⁷⁰ Quite like the Gestalt psychologists, he looks at the different learning processes as a whole, all converging into a unity. This is more or less an integral or whole approach. This is known when he maintains that, 'Learning, teaching and research go together. The unity of these is an old concept, *svadhayaya pravachna*. Colleges should be homes of intellectual adventure shared in common between the young and old'.⁷¹ His wholeness of approach in regard to matters 'educational' becomes more evident when he observes :⁷²

"Science, art, literature and religion converge into a single whole, each portraying a facet with a colour of its own, yet each reflecting something of the rest. Science and art no less than religion are concerned with truth and beauty. They are also based on faith. True education must give us a wholeness of view".

In his equal concern for effecting a 'psychological integration' of the country he makes a strong plea for 'a course in India's cultural heritage', which he feels is essential at all stages of education. He contends that⁷³ 'our young men should become conscious of the value and vitality of our great heritage and be able to discard whatever has been injurious to us in our history. What is living in our culture should be preserved and what is dead should be scrap-

69. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 155.

70. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 100.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

72. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 120

73. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 121.

ped'. It seems as though he feels the pulse of the nation when he remarks :⁷⁴

"We find to-day in our country, inspite of the attainment of Independence and the many impressive achievements, a wide-spread sense of dissatisfaction and frustration. If these things are to be removed and if the young men and women are to be persuaded to enlist themselves in the work of internal consolidation and development, it is essential to emphasize national unity, rapid economic development and a pure clean and honest administration. We must put down the forces that impair our national unity, retard our economic progress, and endeavour to raise standards of efficiency and honesty in our administration. National unity, economic reconstruction and good government are the needs of the hour".

APPEAL TO THE YOUTHS OF THE NATION :

He notices with great poignance that 'We suffer to-day not so much from the split atom as from the split mind. Intoxicated by the achievements of science, we seem to believe in the supremacy of man'. It seems as though 'there is a flight from spiritual life' accounting partly for the frenzy of our time ; that man has not grown in moral character as well as in intellectual power ; and that man is obsessed by unrelenting hatreds and unceasing fears. It is with despair he notes when he says that, "It is a matter for great sorrow that there is not among our youth that sense of exhilaration, that release of energy, that buoyancy of spirit that characterize great liberation movements. Since the attainment of Independence we seem to have lost the inspiration of a great purpose".⁷⁵

In this context, what is the nature of appeal of Dr. Radhakrishnan to the younger generations ? In his unique and striking fashion, he observes in a Convocation Address (Delhi University).⁷⁶

74. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, First Series, p. 86.

75. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 57.

76. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 56.

“Political freedom has given us the great opportunity and the sacred responsibility of building up a new India free from want and disease, rid of the curse of caste and the outcaste, where women will enjoy the same rights as men and where we shall live at peace with the rest of the world. The inspiration of such an India should sustain you in your work ahead”.

His appeal to the youths of the country is that they should all have humility, reverence for the ideals, grace of mind and charity of heart. “To induce the right attitude of life”, he says, “we must refine the minds, the tastes and the manners of our youth. We must make them adopt the principle of all great religions : ‘Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good’.” He further adds :⁷⁷

“We must train the young to the best possible all round living, individual and social. We must make them intelligent and good. They must learn to observe spontaneously those unwritten laws of decency and honour felt by good men but not enforced by any statute”.

Even though he admonishes youths, he is full of love for them. As an instance in point, it may be noted when he says, “unless we preserve the spirit of youth, keep an open mind and change our beliefs and practices, we cannot endure. India has endured for centuries; it is because she has kept her spirit of youth. • She can keep alive only if she does not idolize her institutions, does not turn them into ends in themselves. To preserve the thought, spirit and inspiration of this ancient land and let them inform our customs and institutions are the tasks assigned to this generation of scholars”.⁷⁸

To those who are graduating, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan appeals with emotion in his Gujarat University Convocation Address :

“Graduation marks the end of one stage and the beginning of another. I should like to tell the students

77. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 91.

78. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 151.

that what they have learnt here, intellectual habits, moral character, these things will stand them in good stead and they will be able to make effective contributions to the upbuilding of our country when they enter life".⁷⁹

Generally, one is prone to think, that the limits of knowledge have been reached as soon as one becomes a graduate, but the learned educationist dispels the false notion among graduating youths of the country and points out that, graduation is only a beginning and not an end in the voyage of intellectual discovery. He is convinced that the mechanics of living must be organized, but is emphatic that the art of living should be entirely free. "Our students", he observes, "must go out with faith in the free spirit of man; they must go out with the faith that it is open to them to remake themselves everyday. Everyday we are recasting our own nature; for the worse or for the better, we are recreating ourselves perpetually. If we want to transform possibilities into actualities, what is necessary is the exercise of this freedom, of the subjectivity which the human individuals have".⁸⁰

Rashtrapathi Radhakrishnan is particular, as far as the students are concerned that they should be 'not only intellectually competent and technically skilled but also civilized in their emotions and refined in their purposes'. Only then, he feels 'will they have a liberal outlook, develop compassion and understanding'. In his address 'to the Free University of Brussels', he says :⁸¹

"The future of mankind can be safe only through the efforts of individual men. University men should extend their views in space and time..... We have to train our youth in the consciousness of a common purpose for mankind, in the brotherhood of man. The greatest men of the world are great because of their humanity, fellow-feeling, for their

79. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 165.

80. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 168.

81. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan. Second Series, p. 118.

love of the ideals of knowledge, love and beauty. They are the sculptors of men”.

He feels that students of a University should be trained to struggle against the destructive forces of ‘ignorance, injustice, oppression and fear’. He wants our young men and women to be imparted the urge to ‘strive and suffer and improve the material and moral conditions of our country’, which is the crying need of the hour. He does not stop with this but compels with a unique force that ‘we need a vast moral revolution, which will make our many millions coalesce into a great people, with pride in the country and confidence in its future’. In this regard, he makes no doubt that ‘great books can bring about the change in our mental and moral outlook’. His concern is none-the-less for preparing the youths of the country for the new India and ultimately new minds are necessary for the new world.

In his appeal to the youths, his accent is on the need for ‘discipline of thought’. “We should not wish to destroy our opponents”, he says, “but strive to influence their attitudes and their behaviour. We should commend our views to those who differ from us by the character of our voice and the sympathy of our example”.⁸² “While at College”, Dr. Radhakrishnan commends, “we must learn to respect others not only their life and property but their intangible possessions, their good name and reputation. We are given to small talk, gossip and take pleasure in slandering others. We should try to avoid all that.”⁸³ What the distinguished educationist expects of University men are scientific knowledge and devotion to the cause of national welfare. In a democracy (parliamentary), he feels that the spirit of tolerance is a very essential quality and therefore, differences should not be allowed to tear as it were, the body politic of the country as a whole—respect for the freedom of every human being is according to him, the essential basis

82. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 1b7.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

of political democracy. "Unfortunately in our country to-day," he deplores, "we find that we have not acquired as yet the true spirit of democracy. Differences become conflicts, angry words develop into violent action". "The students", he feels, should learn to act with restraint and tolerate differences. Great opportunities and little minds do not go together. I hope that in the class room, the library, the playfield and the Union the true democratic spirit is observed".⁸⁴

When he looks at the problems of India, he is reminded of all the symptoms of youth, — the restlessness of youth, the fervour of youth, resilience of youth and the capacity to advance into the future. At the same time, it has also got the immaturity of youth. "Several things are happening", he points out, rather poignantly, "which show that we are still very, very young — very young in the sense that we are not able to control ourselves, properly and adequately and that we do things that indicate not the wisdom of age, but the restlessness and the non-restraint of youth itself. So it is, we regard ourselves as a young nation and we want to work as in the spirit of youth with all the resilience which we happen to possess".⁸⁵

These days, student unrest is quite a common phenomenon in institutions of higher learning. Very often, students resort to lawless activities, resulting in closure of such institutions for an indefinite period of time, till peace is restored. Such being the case, no ready-made solution seems to be available to any educationist. Placed in such a situation, how does the distinguished educationist and administrator view the whole problem or the issue? "I do feel", he observes, "that the student unrest and indiscipline — all these things are mainly traceable to the lack of proper nutriment to the human spirit. If we are able to sustain them properly, to give them food for the spirit, music for the soul, gymnastics for the body, and religion for the whole mind, the whole being, for the whole totality

84. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, p. 115.

85. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 90.

of the human-being, we will be able to develop a better nation here".⁸⁶ He goes further and says, "I feel that this country has a future. I have faith in the future of the country — faith in our young people — faith that they will subordinate all these considerations which divide us from one another to the supreme loyalty to this race".⁸⁷

Dr. Radhakrishnan analyses the cause of student unrest very succinctly when he remarks thus :

".....We have got unwieldy classes. A class room which can accommodate about 150 people is supposed to contain 500. What are we encouraging in such a class if it is not indiscipline? It is impossible for us to make a class-room of 150 contain 500 by any amount of congestion which we can bring about. Then again, are there any extra-curricular activities? In most of the Colleges, which are over-crowded, the teachers are few, the boys are many, and there are no opportunities for them to express themselves in free, artistic, emotional, or intellectual activities. In other words, unless we have scope for the expression of the individual's full personality, our College or our University will be a failure. I know that there have been some cases of boys lapsing into moral and spiritual dissolution. If we are not to imperil the future of our country, priority number one must be given to education".⁸⁸

WOMEN'S EDUCATION :

How does Dr. Radhakrishnan view women's education in India? He is in full support of what Manu the great law giver declares that "where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; where they are not honoured, all

86. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 91.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

88. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, First Series, p. 170.

works become fruitless. While recognising the fundamental differences between man and woman, namely that 'women cannot do some things that men can', because, physiology as such prevents this, he holds 'that, however, does not prove any inferiority on their part. We must do the things for which we are made and do them well. His attitude towards women and their education is essentially humanistic. This is revealed when he observes :⁸⁹

"Women are human-beings and have as much right to full development as men have. In regard to opportunities for intellectual and spiritual development, we should not emphasize, the sex of women even as we do not emphasize the sex of men. The fact that we are human-beings is infinitely more important than the physiological peculiarities which distinguish us from one another. In all human-beings, irrespective of their sex, the same drama of the flesh and the spirit, of finitude and transcendence takes place".

It is his firm conviction that women are not any way inferior to men, and that he is in full support of education for women as for men becomes very clear when he says: "we have wasted, in our recent past, women's gifts by failing to recognize them as human beings, able to act, to achieve and to engage in projects, given the right conditions".⁹⁰ He feels happy that women are slowly coming into their own. His full support of women's education is based on Gandhi's experience,—he engaged many women in his struggle for the political liberation of the country. This has greatly helped in the emancipation of Indian women. He conceives of the male and female principle as constituting a fundamental unity — the relation of man and woman is the expression of an urge for duality and as such, each is a self requiring the other as its complement. He holds the view that spiritual life and social service are open to women, though marriage and motherhood are treated as the normal

* 89. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 371.

90. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 373.

vocation for them. "The end of marriage", he holds, "is spiritual comradeship", and at the same time, he is of the view, that 'marriage without motherhood is incomplete'. He holds it a special privilege of a mother 'to bring up her children, to help them to develop their distinctive gifts, physical and mental, ethical and spiritual'.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is deeply concerned with the maintenance of the union of marriage and their strong bonds, which are gradually weakening to-day. It is rather a sorry state of affair. His observations are quite striking in this regard.⁹¹

"The weakening of the union of marriage and so of the family is causing wide-spread concern. It is no use congratulating ourselves that things are not so bad here as in some other countries. For the deterioration is increasing gradually in our country.

To check it we have to adopt higher standards of education and moral instruction, not merely for women, but also for men. A successful marriage requires personal adjustments, which are not easy to make. They are possible only when we accept certain ethical and religious standards".

In his scheme of things, women occupy a unique place of distinction in being the great conservators of our culture. "The large majority of women, as men, however", he says, "prefer marriage and motherhood to the life of saintliness, science, or scholarship..... Even in families where they have received modern education, they adhere to the household ritual, cradle song and popular poetry. A definite philosophy of life is bound up with those. By the very quality of their being, women are the missionaries of civilization. With their immense capacity for self-sacrifice they are the unquestioned leaders in *ahimsa*. They will yet teach the art of peace to the warring world".⁹²

91. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 375.

92. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 377.

Dr. Radhakrishnan accords such a high place to women that he would measure the progress of any society in terms of their position. "The position of women in any society", he holds, "is a true index of its cultural and spiritual level. Men, who are responsible for many of the views about women, have woven fantastic stories about the latter's glamour and instability, and their inferiority to men as well as their mystery and sanctity".⁹³ He admires certain qualities in our women and is for preserving them. To quote his own words :⁹⁴

"Because Oriental women do not generally resort to self-assertive bluster, we need not argue, that they are slaves. There is nothing more attractive than modesty, nothing more shining than shyness in a woman. The femininity of women is not a matter of race or nationality. It belongs to their inmost nature. It is my hope that our women, while participating in public work, will retain their essential qualities which have helped to civilize their race".

Once while addressing women, he appealed to them :

"You are living in an age when there are great opportunities for women in social work, public life and administration. Society requires women of disciplined minds and restrained manners. Whatever line of work you undertake, you should bring to it an honest, disciplined mind. You will then succeed and have the joy of your work".⁹⁵

In his Bikaner Mahila Mandal address, he observes :⁹⁶

"After the achievement of freedom several legislative measures have been enacted with a view to the equal treatment of women and men.

93. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 378.

94. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 383.

95. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Second series, P. 187.

96. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, p. 86.

But legislative measures are not enough. The climate of opinion has to change and women themselves have to exert their utmost to improve, their mental stature. Mahila Mandals of this type where facilities are provided for the uplift of women serve a very useful purpose. It is my earnest hope that more women will take to professions, especially education and health, public service and politics".

In matters regarding social work, he feels that 'women can be of great service'. "It is a matter of satisfaction to us" he commends, "that they have thrown away the restrictions of the past and are now taking their place in every walk of life. We are not satisfied with the present state of progress. Their participation in public life and the professions should be encouraged".⁹⁷

He considers the responsibility of mothers to be very great in the education of the children. "Children", he says, "learn from their mothers their ideas and attitudes". In his plea for effecting a revolution in the minds and hearts of men by social education, he assigns women a leading part to play. What is that leading part? According to him, 'women can play a leading part in this matter of educating our people for a new society where the only distinction will be between the base and the noble, between the wicked and virtuous. Other distinctions are contingent and transitory. Our women are said to be *tapah-pradhanya* while our men are *yagna-pradhanya*. While men have strength, courage and power, women are noted for their beauty, wisdom and love. They have not had much scope for the expression of their great qualities. They are slowly emerging from political and social passivity imposed on them by ancient social traditions. Social emancipation should not lead to the destruction of the innate courtesy and charm for which women have been rightly famous'.⁹⁸ It is his considered opinion that no social progress can be expected with backwardness in women's education, reckoning with the

97. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 346.

98. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit. p. 317.

current figures relating to male and female literacy which has a gulf that need bridging through effective programmes like 'literacy drive' of a special nature for women in backward areas.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF UNIVERSITIES :

Dr. Radhakrishnan's views on the role and functions of Universities deserve a very great regard in view of the fact that he had been at the helm of affairs of one of the greatest Universities in India, namely the Banaras Hindu University, prior to his assumption of Office to the Presidentship of our country. Therefore, whenever he says anything about the University, he does so with his personal knowledge and authority. At a time when the whole country is deeply concerned with the problem of national unity and the greatest need to-day is social discipline, he sets a task to the Universities which is in tune with the spirit of the times. What is the nature of that task? To quote his own words :

“If the Universities are unable to give the students a proper sense of values, a sense of inward restraint and an attitude of setting differences by agreement, if they cannot train their students to behave decently, they have failed in their main function. We may become clever, and efficient, informed and skilled, but we should be able to control ourselves. The swift decline in student behaviour has dangerous consequences to society..... Education, if it is not education in depth, in self-discipline, is wasted labour”.⁹⁹

How does the distinguished educationist define a 'University' ? “A University”, he says, “is not a mere information shop. It is a place where a man's intellect, will and emotions are disciplined. In it experience and adventure are combined..... A University man should be unattached .

99. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 345.

100. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 160.

without being unconcerned; unambitious without being indolent, warm-hearted without being sentimental".¹⁰⁰ He is particular that 'a university should not be a technical institute'. While he does not either ignore intellectual competence or technical skill, which are rather essential, what he emphasizes more is a liberal outlook, development of compassion and understanding, — to be civilized in emotions and refined in our purposes.

He considers Universities as places where we can develop the true spirit of democracy, appreciation of other points of view, and adjustment of differences through discussion. "In universities" he feels, "we have to recall the struggles of the past and realize the perils and possibilities, the challenges and opportunities of the present". To him Universities have a supreme function in the advancement of international understanding and international peace. It is in them we have to develop a new way of thinking and feeling'. While addressing the Charles University of Prague, he declared :¹⁰¹

"Considering the size of the country and the programmes of reconstruction it wishes to implement, we are sending our students abroad for training in subjects for which adequate facilities are not available in our country. Even when our Universities become developed, contacts with other countries and their Universities will not stop; for it is the function of Universities to foster a sense of world community".

In his flight of imagination, Dr. Radhakrishnan, carries forward the level of intellectual thinking in Universities at a dizzy height and it becomes challengingly characteristic when he says :¹⁰²

"In the physical sense of the term, we belong to our age but as University men we escape"

101. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Second Series, p. 120.

102. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 123.

from the trammels of our age and nation and become, in the true sense of the word, contemporaries of all ages. Reverence for the great minds of the past and the expansion of the future bounds of knowledge are the prerogatives of a University”.

“The fellowship in a University,” he remarks, “transcends the barriers of race and nation, of clan and creed and honours the achievements in art and literature, science and scholarship of a variety of peoples. It exemplifies in a small way the fraternity we wish to build up among human beings”.¹⁰³ He does not believe in merely changing a College into a University. “A College does not become a University”, he says, “simply because we change the name, make the principal the Vice-Chancellor and the Superintendent the Registrar. The change of name must imply a change of character. To deserve the name of a University there are certain minimum requirements. A University should make provision for advanced study and research in the subjects taught. We must have professors who have done outstanding-research work and are able to guide others. For this, they require detachment and freedom from the worries of daily existence”.¹⁰⁴

What makes the soul of a University? He does not believe that mere buildings, however well-equipped make a University. What constitutes the real soul of a University, in his opinion is ‘the teachers and the pupils and their pursuit of knowledge’. “The University”, he observes, “is the sanctuary of the intellectual life of a country. The healthy roots of national life are to be found in the people. They are the well-springs of national awakening. When we give education, we start a ferment of debate and discussion of first principle. The educated youths will voice their thoughts and find fault with things as they are. We train in this University not only doctors and engineers but also men and women who think for themselves”.¹⁰⁵.

103. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 124.

104. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 81.

105. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 126.

In his address to the Moscow University, he remarked that “we in the Universities have to prepare the mind of the world for the establishment of a world community with a common consciousness and common conscience. This is possible only if the nations which have the power to annihilate each other renounce that power. This requires an act of faith”.¹⁰⁶

In his Madras University Centenary Convocation Address, he observes : ¹⁰⁷

“ in this unquiet modern world which science and technology have compressed into a single neighbourhood, this University and others, by their united efforts may further the cause of peace and understanding. A University is a fellowship, devout in its admiration of what has been achieved in the past, yet believing in the richness of the future which lies before us all, a fellowship which transcends all barriers of race and nation, of class and creed and yet honours the artistic and intellectual traditions of a variety of peoples. The scholars and scientists are not always immune to the political passions which infect their countries. But in the pursuit of knowledge they, with their austerity and detachment, can rise above them and see in their political enemy their professional colleague. In the Universities atleast we must be able to lift our gaze above national interests and breathe the pure air of disinterested inquiry”.

He upholds the ideal that ‘the leaders of every University must hold aloft the spirit of man ’ “We need all our skill, fortitude and determination” he says, “to shape the future along democratic lines not only of our country but of the world. If this University has faith and produces in the years to come men and women of learning and virtue, skill

106. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, p. 132.

107 S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, pp. 205—206.

and judgement, piety and character we will bear the intolerable, achieve the impossible and establish the reign of truth, justice and love of earth".¹⁰⁸

He arrives at the broadest definition of a 'University' when he says that 'A University by its very definition has a universal outlook. For it nothing human is alien. Its function is to develop a world community. This service helps people in different parts of the world to understand one another'.¹⁰⁹ "Those who work in the University", he emphasizes, "should aim at acquiring not only learning but culture, that refinement of the soul which we define as *atmasamskriti*. This refinement helps us to conquer the forces of greed and arrogance and develop a way of living, a standard of behaviour which requires us to take the interest of other members of society".¹¹⁰

In his Gujarat University Convocation Address, he defines more or less the functions of a University. His remarks run as follows :

"Universities are expected to prepare young men and women with not only information, knowledge and skill but also spirit of dedication and detachment. These qualities are essential for the stupendous task of remaking the history of this great country..... Universities are not mere places of learning. They are homes of culture. Man-making is the task that has been assigned to the Universities in our country to-day. Are we making men, are we merely turning out people who can repeat parrot-like certain passages, or are we giving them a refinement of feeling, a civilizing of their purposes, a ripening of their understanding, both of nature and of society? That is the supreme test of the functioning of any University. And if we are not able to

108. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 206.

109. Occasional Speeches and Writings: First Series, p. 178.

110. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 179.

fulfil this purpose we are responsible for the failure".¹¹¹

He conceives of the purpose of all Universities to try to integrate the individual and the society—through advancing knowledge and communicating it to others. "It is the main function of Universities", he says, "to foster world loyalties, a sense of moral values and faith in the human spirit, ideals which are shared by the Universities of the East and the West".¹¹²

He stresses that 'it is in the Universities that we should develop a corporate feeling and a feeling of social purpose. Our Universities must give inspiration to a generation which stands in sore need of it'.

He likens a University to a 'corporation of teachers and students' whose relations shall be of a sacred character. "The kind of education that we provide for our youth", he observes, "is determined overwhelmingly by the kind of men and women we secure as teachers. Magnificent buildings and equipment are no substitute for the great teacher. Every attempt should be made to draw a good proportion of the best ability in the country in the teaching profession. If this country is to participate in the march of mind in science and scholarship, Universities must recruit for their staff some of the best minds of the country. The University teacher should be helped to live in comfort, if he is to devote himself to learning, teaching and research. As the young recruits to the Universities are paid low salaries, they fail to appreciate intellectual values and get interested in writing text-books or obtaining examinations. I hope the University Service will become as attractive as the all-India Services, for that is the only way to recruit and retain some of the ablest persons for the Universities. As the example of the teacher has great influence on the pupils, we cannot evade our responsibility to the teaching profession".¹¹³

111. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, p. 169.

112. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.* p. 103.

113. S. Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, pp. 63—64.

"A University", he says, "should give us faith in things unseen, in values which are intangible. With that outlook we will grow in our humanity, develop the world vision, work for the world community, become world citizens : *Visva manusah*. There can be no rest for us so long as justice and love do not hold sway over the lives of men. Humanity is yet in its infancy. The gates of the future are wide open".¹¹⁴ In a special convocation address, in honour of President Eisenhower (Delhi University), he points out :¹¹⁵

"A University, as its very name signifies, is a symbol of the University of spirit. It has a claim to all human knowledge. For a University there is only one race, the human race. We need to see beneath any colour of skin, any cast of countenance, any pattern of society, the same human urges, the same fundamental moral values".

He characterises the function of a University 'to build human beings, strive to rid them of their vanities and egotism and emancipate their minds from petty prejudices and narrow royalties. *Sa Vidya ya vimuktaye*. Such enfranchized souls who fear nothing more than cowardice, who despise nothing more than insincerity are needed to-day for the building of our country'.¹¹⁶

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS :

Rashtrapathi Radhakrishnan's birthday is now-a-days celebrated as Teachers' Day and, it is but a fitting tribute and honour to one of the greatest and most distinguished educationist of our country and teacher par excellence of eminent standing. Whenever he makes a special appeal to the teachers, it is borne out by the richness of experience as a teacher for more than four decades. As an instance in point at a Conference of Governors (Inaugural Address)

114. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, p. 88.

115. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 86.

116. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 80.

held at Rashtrapathi Bhavan, New Delhi (October, 1961), he remarked :¹¹⁷

“It is essential that we should have teachers who, by their example exercise a wholesome influence on the students — teachers who are free from the canker of communalism and factionalism. Wholesome instruction in the classes is also essential.....

On the occasion of distribution of Awards for Teachers (October, 1961) Dr. Radhakrishnan pertinently observed :¹¹⁸

“We in our country look upon teachers as *gurus*, *acharyas* : What do these words indicate? *Acharya* is one whose *achar* or conduct is exemplary, is good. If he is a victim of *durachaar*, then he is not an *acharya*. He must be an example of *sadachaar*, of good conduct. He must inspire the pupils who are entrusted to his care with love of virtue and goodness and abhorrence of cruelty and violence. That is the first essential for any kind of civilized being. We must love the good and detest the bad. Until we are able to give our youngsters that kind of outlook, we cannot call ourselves good teachers. I hope that ideal of a true teacher will be remembered by us :

Andhakaranirodhata gurur ityabhidhiyate.

Andhakar is not merely intellectual ignorance but spiritual blindness. He who is able to remove that kind of spiritual blindness is called a *guru*. Are we deserving of that noble appellation of an *acharya* or a *guru*? That is the first thing that everyone of us will have to realise”.

In the course of the same address, he appealed to teachers that they should not only have scientific knowledge but wisdom also — scientific knowledge by itself is not all.

117. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 351.

118. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit. p. 166.

"We therefore appeal to our teachers", he said, "that they should themselves be filled with a modernist attitude, with a progressive outlook, with a forward-looking direction. Unless they themselves have it they cannot make their students forward-looking".¹¹⁹ He calls upon teachers to spread the spirit of this kind of outlook and attitude. He is particular that teachers should imbibe the spirit of 'perpetual self-renewal', — the capacity to cast away things which are obnoxious. "Our teachers", he is proud to say, "are the reservoirs of this new spirit, the new spirit of adventure in intellectual matters, in social matters, in political matters. If you do not have that spirit, you cannot communicate that spirit to the youth, who are entrusted to your care. Therefore, I appeal to the teachers that if the generous youth, hospitable youth, adventurous youth, courageous youth, whom we have in our country, if they are to be utilized for building up a new country, a new India, a new society, the beginning must come from the teachers themselves. They must know what this country stands for and they must be able to communicate that vitality, not merely instruction".¹²⁰

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan expects teachers to be exemplars of good conduct so that by the examples they set, the pupils might imbibe the right spirit. To quote the distinguished teacher again :¹²¹

"Let me tell you, the boys do not care for what you teach them but they care for the example you set. It is not merely the instruction which you impart to them in the class room but the kind of life you lead. You think that they do not see it but they have eyes to see and ears to hear. They know everything about their teachers and if they have no respect for the teachers it is because they know more than they ought to know, more than what you expect them to know. Therefore, it is edu-

119. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 169.

120. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 160.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

cation, it is instruction, it is knowledge and it is also the example which the teachers give".

With legitimate pride and satisfaction in the teaching profession, which he served all his life, he remarks:¹²²

"I have been a teacher for nearly all my adult life, for over forty years. I have lived with students and it hurts me very deeply when I find that the previous years during which a student has to live in the University are wasted by some of them. I do not say by all of them. Teachers and students form a family and in a family you cannot have the spirit of the trade union. Such a thing should be inconceivable in a University. University life is a co-operative enterprise between teachers and students".

In his Punjab University Convocation address, (December, 1953), Rashtrapathi Radhakrishnan makes superb observation :¹²³

"Buildings and equipment are not all. Good teachers who are interested in the welfare of the students, who have enthusiasm for their subjects and are able to impart it to the pupils—they form the central framework of a University. Our commercial-minded generation reserves its respect for those who make money and so the best ability is drawn into administration, business and the learned professions. We have to realize that the kind of education we provide for our children is determined overwhelmingly by the kind of men and women we secure as teachers. The low esteem in which teachers are held is the most eloquent evidence of the malady from which our society suffers. We must get the right type of men for the

122. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, First Series, p. 54.

123. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 68.

teaching profession and not the incompetent and the unambitious. Respect for the teachers cannot be ordered. It must be earned”.

Quite recently, President Radhakrishnan, in his message conveyed on the occasion of Teachers’ Day—which is being observed as the birthday of the President throughout the country says :¹²⁴

“I have much pleasure in conveying my greetings and good wishes to teachers throughout India on September 5. Teachers have a vital role to play in the progress and development of the country, for on them depends how the new generation is trained to face the increasing responsibilities of citizenship and administration. And yet if the teachers have to perform their duties well, the people and the Government must ensure them reasonable conditions of life and work. Education has been receiving a good deal of emphasis in the development plan of the country, but for success the teachers must have pride in their profession and faith in their task and we can help in the process by giving the teachers the recognition which they deserve.”

The message reproduced above conveys how much concern and love and deep interest, the Rāhtrapathi evinces in the welfare of teachers, of which galaxy he is one of the most distinguished of our country to-day.

124. *Vide* Newspaper report—Hindu, of the President’s message, dated Sep. 4, 1964.

It may be noted that September, 5, 1964, was observed as Teachers’ Day—the birthday of President Dr. Radhakrishnan, in the whole country. The extract of the message of the President as reported in the newspapers, is quoted above.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

NEW DIMENSIONS IN NEHRU'S THINKING :

The Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our India's first Prime Minister, was the nation's darling, the light that never dimmed in its brilliance, but shone in its resplendent splendour, and steadily kindled a flame in every individual heart—young and old alike. Apart from his having been our country's cherished Prime Minister, he was our India's Chief educator for our generation since the Gandhī era. What is it that endears him to us ? It was his love for India. Even his love for India was not so much for things of the past ; there was no blind adoration of the past as such though his love for the past was nevertheless—but because of his faith in the present. In his inaugural address of the Azad Memorial Lectures, he points out :¹

“We must look to the future and work for it purposively and with faith and vigour, at the same time we must keep our past inheritance and derive sustenance from it. Change is essential, but continuity is also necessary. The future has to be built on the foundations laid in the past and the present. To deny the past and break with it completely is to uproot ourselves and, sapless, dry up”.

Having been strongly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, Panditji kept his feet always firmly planted in the rich traditions of our race and our soil and, at the same time, he was great and noble enough to function, equally like his master, nay much more, on the revolutionary plane.

1. 'Jawaharlal Nehru' INDIA TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW, Inaugural Address of the Azad Memorial Lectures, held under the auspices of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, Feb., 1959, published in 'The Index-Asian Culture', New Delhi, July, 1959, Issue—Page-11.

What was it in the past towards which he was irresistably drawn ? For he says :²

"The early beginnings of our history filled me with wonder. It was the past of a virile and vigorous race with a questing spirit, an urge for free inquiry and, even in its earliest known period, giving evidence of a mature and tolerant civilization. Accepting life and its joys and burdens, it was ever searching for the ultimate and the universal. It built up a magnificent language, Sanskrit, and through this language and its art and architecture, it sent its vibrant message to far countries. It produced the Upanishads, the Gita and the Buddha.

"Hardly any language in the world has played that vital part in the history of the race which Sanskrit has. It was not only the vehicle of the highest thought and some of the finest literature, but it became the uniting bond for India, even though there were political divisions. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were woven into the texture of millions of lives in every generation for thousands of years. I have often wondered that if our race forgot the Buddha, the Upanishads and the great epics, what then will it be like ? It would be uprooted and would lose the basic characteristics which have clung to it and given it distinction throughout these long ages. India would cease to be India".

Apart from his admiration for whatever was great in India's past, it was the present and the shaping of the future that engaged much of his attention. In this regard, his observations are pertinent :³

"We are plunging into the world of science and technology and trying to organize our knowledge in such a way that commands more of the forces of Nature, and we are held back not only by our poverty and under-development, but also by some inherited

2. *Ibid*, p. 8.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 9—10.

ideas and customs. There is no future for us without science and technology. At the same time that future will be shallow and empty and without any real meaning if we ignore or forget our past".

The passage quoted above is a pointer to the administrators, in general, and no less the educationists at the helm of affairs, as to how we should proceed in our educational reconstruction. It only indicates the need for *a tremendous dynamism, a striving for a new equilibrium, and a new dimension in our thinking*. Will such a fiery spirit seize the future educators of the country's teeming millions ?

Jawaharlal Nehru emphasises the need for a worth-while ideal and a sense of purpose 'beyond the material and physical demands of our daily lives'. Though the 'Welfare State', he points out is a worthwhile ideal in a way, it may well be rather drab. Certain examples of States which have no doubt achieved that objective might bring out new problems and difficulties, which he says, cannot be solved by mere material advance or by a mechanical civilization. Speaking about religion and its part, he observes :⁴

"Religion has played an important part in supplying some essential needs of human nature. But that type of religion has weakened its hold and is unable to meet the onslaught of science and rationalism. Whether religion is necessary or not, a certain faith in worthwhile ideal is essential to give substance to our lives and to hold us together. We have to have a sense of purpose beyond the material and physical demands of our daily lives"

Pragmatism is such a strong force in his life's philosophy that, coupled with a tremendous dynamism, he is able to galvanize the slumbering masses into eternal wakefulness and action. Ever since he visited Soviet Russia for the first time, he has been holding on firmly to the faith that 'only through right education can a better order of society be

4. *Ibid*, pp. 10—11.

built up'. Immediately after his return from his visit to Soviet Russia, he remarked :⁵

"Education is not something in the air, cut off from the daily life of the student or from his future work as a citizen. Real education, it is felt, must be based on the actual environment and experiences of the child, and it must fit him for the work he will have to do in after life".

Stressing the importance of education in his *Glimpses of World History*, his *Magnum Opus*, he observes :⁶

"A boy or girl may be quite smart and may become a clever and efficient person if suitable education and training are given. But if no arrangements are made for the education or training what is the poor boy or girl to do ?"

Having realised the importance of education as a *must* for all he goes a step further in his *Essay in 'unity of India'* where he categorically asserts :⁷

"We shall have to upset the present incompetent and inefficient top-heavy system of education and build anew on securer foundations".

What he, of course referred to was the then existing British system of education, alien in its characteristics, ill-suited to the genius of the country. That was perhaps the reason why he wanted the 'incompetent, inefficient and top-heavy education' to be upset. But one wonders, if the existing system of education also does not need some 'upsetting' if we are not to be too complacent about it. He was quite convinced that though the education under the British Government was a 'limited and perverted education, it opened the doors and windows of the mind to new ideas and dynamic thoughts'. It is a known fact that the British

5. Quoted in Sen's (Edited): *Wit and Wisdom of Nehru*, New Book Society of India, New Delhi (1960), p. 173.

6. Quoted in N. B. Sen's (Ed.): *Wit and Wisdom of Nehru* p. 173.

7. *Ibid*, p. 173.

Government, inspite of its dislike of education, was compelled by circumstances to arrange for the training and production of clerks for its ever-increasing and growing establishment. How could that alien system suit free India ?

The essential unity behind the enormous variety of this country has always appealed to him in its entirety, which he never failed to emphasise either in his writings or speeches. For instance, in his inaugural address of the Azad Memorial Lectures, he points out quite appropriately :⁸

“Thus every century is represented in this country and, in addition, there is enormous variety. Behind that variety there is unity which has kept our people together through the ages inspite of misfortune and disaster”.

One finds the same rigour and vigour in his appeal in the course of a speech delivered at Trichur :⁹

“Wherever I go I lay stress on something that is obvious, with which everyone should agree. I lay stress on the unity of India, not merely the political unity which we have achieved, but something far deeper, the emotional unity, the integration of our minds and hearts, the suppression of feelings of separatism”.

While emphasising the need for unity, he does not ignore the variety behind it. Had he not been quite conscious of it how could he utter in the same vein :¹⁰

“It is good to have various parties because when there are different approaches to a problem, more light is thrown upon it. I do not believe in all people being regimented to think in one way. I want free flow and free exchange of thought and out of that we some-times find a bit of the truth”.

8. Jawaharlal Nehru: *Azad Memorial Lectures*: op. cit., p. 9.

9. Jawaharlal Nehru's *Speeches*, (Vol. 3), March, 1953—August 1957, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p. 36.

10. * *Ibid*, p. 36.

The above passage is revealing in the sense, how truly democratic he was in his way of thinking.

Similarly, he considered the whole of India a common heritage and a common inheritance—not at all a private or a close preserve of any individual. The spirit behind his appeal is such, when he says:¹¹

“They are your inheritance also. They belong to you as to anybody else in India. So the whole of India from the North to the South is the common heritage of every Indian, and all India’s history, from thousands and thousands of years till to-day, is our common heritage. All the culture of India, whether it comes from the North or the South or anywhere else, is our common heritage, and what is more, the great future that spreads out before us is going to be our common heritage”.

Especially at a time, when the whole country to-day, is in the vortex of narrow chauvinism,—linguistic and communalistic, the appeal of the greatest leader of our generation should not be lost on us, who are the inheritors and the builders of future India.

NEHRU’S APPROACH TO EDUCATION :

He was essentially interested ‘in this world, in this life’, and naturally, he could not brook any kind of a divorce between action and basic urges or principles. He puts it very succinctly when he says : ¹²

“Whatever ultimate reality may be, and whether we can grasp it in whole or in part, there certainly appear to be vast possibilities or increasing human knowledge, even though this may be partly or largely subjective, and of applying this to the advancement and betterment of human living and social organization”.

Thus, Pandit Nehru conceives of education, or greater knowledge as an instrument for something greater and

11. *Ibid*, p. 36

12. Jawaharlal Nehru: “*The Discovery of India*” Meridian Books Ltd., London, 1960, p. 16.

nobler,—as an effective instrument to solve the problems of life.

What are the real problems of life, according to Jawaharlal Nehru? To put it in his own words :¹³

“The real problems for me remain problems of individual and social life, or harmonious living, of a proper balancing of an individual’s inner and outer life, of an adjustment of the relations between individuals and between groups, of a continuous becoming and something better and higher, of social development, of the ceaseless adventure of man”.

How to solve these real problems ? Pandit Nehru, the intuitive thinker and practical genius, gives us the clue :¹⁴

“In the solution of these problems the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning, according to the method of science, must be followed. This method may not always be applicable in our quest of truth, for art and poetry and certain psychic experience seem to belong to a different order of things and to elude the objective methods of science. Let us, therefore, not rule out intuition and other methods of sensing truth and reality. They are necessary even for the purposes of science. But always we must hold to our anchor of precise objective knowledge tested by reason, and even more so by experiment and practice, and always we must beware of losing ourselves in a sea of speculation unconnected with the day-to-day problems of life and the needs of men and women. A living philosophy must answer the problems of to-day”.

Such is the keen sense of realism in Nehru’s educational philosophy.

Science and technology appealed much to him. Was he himself not a student of Science ? That is why he says :¹⁵

13. *Discovery of India*, p. 17.

14. *Ibid*, p. 17.

15. *Ibid*, pp. 17—18.

“Yet I am convinced that the methods and approach of science have revolutionized human life more than anything else in the long course of history, and have opened doors and avenues of further and even more radical change, leading up to the very portals of what has long been considered the unknown. The technical achievements of science are obvious enough : its capacity to transform an economy of scarcity into one of abundance is evident, its invasion of many problems which have so far been the monopoly of philosophy is becoming more pronounced. Man no longer sees Nature as something apart and distinct from himself. Human destiny appears to become a part of Nature’s rhythmic energy”.

But at the same time, Pandit Nehru, is hopeful as was his wont, that ‘the great development of science and technology and, more particularly, communications, presses more and more towards larger integrations’. He is optimistic enough to visualise, ‘it may be presumed that in this, as in other matters, science, representing the basic facts of modern life, will win in the end’. The real danger he senses, comes from nationalist conflicts which may lead to war, if not thwarted. He conceives of science and technology as constantly changing functions and so, he rightly feels that the social structure has necessarily to adapt itself—adapting its form to these new functions.

Pandit Nehru’s philosophy of life is that ‘living is a continual adjustment to changing conditions’. Thus, according to him, the essential and most revolutionary factor in modern life is not a particular ideology, but technological advance. As he says, ‘the rapidity of technological change in the last half century has made the necessity of social change greater than ever, and there is a continual maladjustment’. But how to correct this maladjustment ? Nehru’s reply is :¹⁶

“A life divorced from Nature and more and more dependent upon mechanical devices begins to lose its

16. Jawaharlal Nehru: Azad Memorial Lectures, pp. 22—23.

savour and even the sense of function leaves it. Moral and spiritual disciplines break up, and some kind of disillusion follows with a feeling that something is wrong with our civilisation. Some people talk of going back to Nature and to the simple life of the ancient days. But, whatever virtue there was in this, there can obviously be no going back, for the world has changed. An individual may take *sannyasa* with its renunciation of life, but society as a whole cannot do so. It has to base itself on an acceptance of life with all its problems and difficulties and try to make the most of it. If it did not do so, it would perish".

While admitting of the need for change in a modern society of science and technology, he is cautious enough as not to impose it. For, he says :¹⁷

"Any real change cannot easily be imposed. It has to grow. Even as Nature establishes some kind of an equilibrium which cannot be disturbed suddenly without untoward results appearing, so also in a community or a country, it is not easy or desirable to upset old ways of living too suddenly. The attempt to solve a problem in this way might well lead to graver and more difficult problems".

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION :

What role does Nehru assign to education as a potent instrument in preparing for this real change ? He considers education as of basic importance, not only on grounds of the intrinsic desirability of education for its own sake, but also on grounds that 'people should have education in sheer self-defence, whether it be defence as a nation against other nations of the world, or within the nation itself. "Obviously," he points out, "in every system, education has to be given a very high place. The problem now is what type of education it should be and also how far we should go in for expensive buildings".¹⁸

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

18. Jawaharlal Nehru's speeches, Vol, III p. 400.

He is open enough to admit that 'man to-day' as never before in human history, has to live with change as a permanent partner in his activities and his institutions'. Enunciating the aim of education, he points out :¹⁹

"Education is supposed to develop an integrated human being and to prepare young people to perform useful functions for society and to take part in collective life. But when that society is changing from day-to-day it is difficult to know how to prepare and what to aim at".

Pandit Nehru notices with uncanny precision, the lack of harmony between a highly technical civilisation of the West, and the older forms of social life and the philosophy underlying them, as in our country. What happens as a result of penetration of science and technology into the hitherto-unknown regions is, a change in the relationship to Nature, and even the relationship to one's own personality undergoes a change. He is deeply perturbed over the diminishing value of human personality in a mechanical society, governed by machine and automation where the individual loses himself in a mass and tends to become merely an instrument in an evergrowing complex set up. It is in this context that Jawaharlal perceives the need for developing new ideologies, new forms of collective life and, indeed, a broader philosophy of life.

He keeps the ancient Indian ideal of life before him as his life's philosophy, fearlessness or *abhaya*. Was not *Gandhiji's* contribution to India to lessen this sense of fear among our people? Nehru considers fear probably the greatest evil, because out of fear rise conflict and violence. Violence, he points out, is a reaction to fear, so also is untruth. Rightly, therefore, does he inculcate the quality of fearlessness, as an object of education. Speaking about fearlessness, he says :²⁰

"A person who is free from fear can view things in a right perspective and can preserve a certain integrity in mind and actions....."

19. Jawaharlal Nehru, Azad Memorial Lectures, p. 23.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 25—26.

“Fearlessness leads to compassion and tolerance. When we think of the Buddha, it is his compassion that overwhelms us; when we think of Ashoka, it is his amazing toleration that pulls us up from our narrow creeds.

“The world is full of conflicts, national, international and of race, religion, creed and class. It is absurd to deny or ignore these conflicts, but we can approach them not by way of conflict, but by way of peace and thus seek to resolve them”.

Being the architect of our country's Five-Year Plans, and the main accelerator of the pace of progress in all directions, he never failed to draw pointed attention to the role of education in it as a *pace-setter*. For, he observes :²¹

“Education is the base of this progress and considerable attention is being paid now both to the spread of basic education and technical education. Millions of boys and girls are going through school and college courses and hundreds of thousands are being trained in Universities and technical institutes..... But even so, the numbers are large and as they come out of school and college, they bring a new outlook to the business of their lives. Thus, slowly, but inevitably, our social patterns are changing. The greatest and perhaps the most revolutionary change is through the enlargement of women's education. It is these girls and young women who are influencing and will progressively change the whole life of the people of India.....

“Much is said in criticism of present day education and nearly all of us have joined in criticising some aspects of it. And yet the fact remains that education is spreading fast and changing the texture of our living”.

In his Convocation Address at the Muslim University of Aligarh, he defines the object of education as meant to free

21. Jawaharlal Nehru: Azad Memorial Lectures (Inaugural Address), p. 29.

the spirit of man and not to imprison it in set frames. The India of his dreams was to 'build up a free India of high ideals and noble endeavour where there is equality of opportunity for all and where many variegated streams of thought and culture meet together to form a mighty river of progress and advancement for her people'.* He emphasises a broad outlook, to be created by education of a right type and he warns against being led away by the narrowness of others into becoming narrow in spirit and outlook ourselves. Should we have big buildings for our education? How far should we go in for expensive buildings for educational purposes? What are Panditji's views in these regards? He observes:²²

".....the fact remains that we have inherited all kinds of astonishing ideas about buildings and the rest. I am quite sure that education will advance rapidly if we simplify our ideas about buildings and spend more on education and less on bricks. I am all for dignified buildings for educational institutions. I believe that good buildings do produce a strong impression on the person concerned. I do not want shabby, shoddy structures; we should put up dignified, solid buildings, but, meanwhile, if we are to make progress, let us spend what we have on education and its contents, rather than on brick and mortar".

Jawaharlal was greatly concerned about the fact that 'whatever group or religion one might belong to', education was essential. Education was not just an ornament for him. "By education", says Panditji. "I mean education and not merely learning to be lady-like. Learning to be lady-like may be good in itself but it is not education as such. Education has mainly two aspects, the cultural aspect which makes a person grow, and the productive aspect which makes a person do things. Both are essential. Everybody should be a producer as well as a good citizen and not a sponge on another person even though the other person may be one's own husband or wife.... So it is highly necessary

* Refer: Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, Vol. I, p. 335.
22. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. 3, p. 401.

that we should develop our education, among our girls more especially, because men are provided for to some extent".²³

In his equal concern for education, he is particular that there should be a right type of education in the country. Sometimes he gets upset over the prevailing wrong type of education and in such a mood, he is naturally tempted to observe:²⁴

"We talk a good deal about education; it is obviously a basic thing and a most important thing. Yet, I am sometimes a little frightened by the type of education that is given and the results that it produces. This does not mean that education is bad. But sometimes, the wrong type of education, instead of educating, merely produces, in an immature and illiterate mind, the impression that it is literate and knows everything. Any one in a position of responsibility has at least to ponder over these questions if not to decide them".

Education, in a sense imparted in the right environment, is no doubt likely to produce the best type of human being. Quite obviously, environment is very important. Pandit Nehru is keenly sensitive to this aspect of education and pertinently observes:²⁵

"But apart from school or college education, the entire environment that surrounds us naturally affects the development of the human being. What kind of environment has produced these great ages of history? Are we going towards that environment or going away from it, inspite of the great progress that we have made in many departments of human life".

He attaches much importance to creative imagination, which he says, is highly valuable in a mechanically minded race; the mind which produced the machine to help itself becoming a slave of that machine is deplorable. Hence he

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 401—402.

24. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. 2, p. 464.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

points out his 'concept of man', which consists essentially in encouraging the life of the mind. But does the modern life give scope for this? "If the life of the mind is not encouraged", says Panditji, "then inevitably civilization deteriorates, the race deteriorates and ultimately both collapse in some big cataclysm or just fade away and become as other races and civilizations have become".²⁶ He is firm in his belief that if 'creative imagination is lacking, our growth becomes more and more stunted, which is a sign of decay'. He would measure the vitality of a group, an individual or a society by the extent to which it possesses courage and, above all, creative imagination.

NEHRU'S BROADER VIEWS ON EDUCATION:

To him, the close association of thought with action is, of utmost importance. "Thought without action", says Jawaharlal, "is an abortion, action without thought is folly. They must always be allied, whatever we may do. There is some value in making plans, of course, it has to be done but the man who does the job in the field is actually creating something and there is nothing like creative activity for the growth of the individual and the community".²⁷ Probably, the reason why he is favourably inclined towards basic education lies, apart from its other virtues, in the fact that we really get down to something and not just repeat things from a book. We get even the smallest child to do something,—the idea being to get down to the job with one's hands and feet and not talk about it, thought and action being closely allied to each other. This was what Nehru admired most in basic education.

Is 'basic education' a throw-back to some primitive stage of education? Educationalists in the country, who are sceptical about basic education, have criticised it so, probably because, they have their own valid reasons to their support. What does Pandit Nehru think of basic education as such? He is thinking aloud, when he says

26. *Ibid.*, p. 395.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 68—69.

28. *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*; Vol. Three p. 403.

“Looked at purely from the educational point of view any modern educationist is bound to accept this basic method of education, and yet unfortunately, and to my great surprise, some educationists in our country have criticised it and have said that this is a throw-back to some primitive stage of education. I can only say that they have not taken the trouble to understand what basic education is. Further, they have not quite understood what India is aiming at to-day”.

Therefore, it is obvious that Nehru is not one who is led to believe that basic education is just a ‘throw-back’ to some primitive stage of education. While it is true, he argues, that the old style of education,—originally started by the British a century and a half ago, while it produced some fine specimens of humanity, could not be considered the perfect type of education. Quite in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi, he upholds dignity of labour, which unfortunately, he deplores, has been considered ‘something bad and degrading and meant only for the lower-class people’. “I doubt if anything has done more harm to India” says Nehru, “than this peculiar and fantastic notion that manual labour is meant only for the lower-class people and that the upper-class person should not use his hands but should do what is called mental or intellectual work. That idea still persists. I can only describe it as a wrong and pernicious idea. I do not think that any nation which thinks that way can really progress. Manual work is essential even from the point of view of physical development, apart from anything else”.

The emphasis on the physical aspects in basic education attracted him much, because of his own faith in the importance of physical fitness. It is wellknown that Pandit Nehru always attached a good deal of importance to the body. He claimed to have good health throughout his life, and he always had an acute dislike for illness or feebleness. He considered it to be everybody’s duty to be fit and strong,

and he did not sympathize with any-body's illness. That is why he says : ³⁰

"I want young people and old to be healthy and strong and agile, and I want them to be physically an A-I Nation. I do not think we can really make much intellectual progress unless we have a good physical background".

Why Nehru favours Basic Education ? Just as any body else, he has his own valid reasons. He conceives of education as having the two-fold objectives of 'achieving the national aims and social objectives of free India'. In particular, he wants to have a system of education which can train the right type of personnel for the speedy execution of development-plans,—education for a purpose. What is important to him is that 'each person should produce something of value to society'. His idealistic concept of society is as follows : ³¹

"We want a society in which everybody is a producer in some way or the other. Since everyone is a consumer he must be a producer also. And if he is to be a producer, and an effective producer, he must know his job well by learning it well. We want first-rate men at the top but we want everyone to be good at the particular job he does. If that is our objective, then our whole training must be aimed at that. It should be ideological training, intellectual training, as well as physical training".

It is only in this connection that Jawaharlal Nehru considers basic education a very important scheme, which is supposed to provide an adequate background for following a profession or trade in the period of seven years of study, between the ages of, say, seven and fourteen years. The seven years of basic training, common for all, he says, 'should give the child some cultural attainments, character, and the capacity to work with his hands and to co-ordinate manual labour with mental and intellectual ability'. That type of education which presumes to concern itself only with

30. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 405.

the reading of books is from his point of view incomplete. His ideal view is that "you may become a distinguished mathematician or an eminent individual otherwise, but you will find you will be an even better mathematician if your body functions properly. I do not like persons going about with a bent back. I want them to be straight like a ramrod and walk erect. I want them to be quick in their walk and not to saunter and loiter, as many do".³²

What are the virtues of Basic Education according to Pandit Nehru ? says he :³³

"Basic education stresses both things—physical or cultural fitness and the ability to do things with the hands. You can take it from me that if your hands can do things, your mind will work more satisfactorily".

Thus, it becomes evident, that Jawaharlal Nehru endorses the basic scheme of education wholeheartedly, without any reservation. He favours seven-year basic schooling for all children. After that, the boy or girl may at a later stage go on to higher studies. "Higher studies do not necessarily mean only a degree" says Nehru, "like the B.A. or M.A". "It also means study at some kind of scientific or technical institute where one can specialize".

What are his considered views on Basic Education ? He observes :³⁴

"Basic education should be provided for every child of the schoolgoing age. This training should be fitted into the vocations and professions of later life. After the basic stage, many people may go on to acquire additional training. Or they may become good farmers, good shopkeepers or good artisans. They need not go to a College or University. But those who have the capacity should go in for higher technical training like higher scientific, engineering or medical training. The basic training and the higher training should be properly linked. The training of our youth in mind

32. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

34. *Ibid.* p. 406.

and body is a subject of the highest importance for us. We must get rid of the extraordinary notion that manual work is something degrading. There is nothing more ennobling than manual work and nothing better for physical or mental health".

ON EDUCATING CHILDREN :

"Chacha Nehru", is by now quite a familiar term to several hundreds and thousands of Indian children whom he endeared himself and who in turn was endearing them as his own beloved children. For the past several years, November 14, every year has been observed as children's day, all over India. What was it that endeared him to these children ? It was his abounding love and affection of an overpowering nature that won a place in the heart of every child of India. How ardently he loved children becomes clear when he says :³⁵

"Nothing saddens me so much as the sight of children who are denied education, sometimes denied even food and clothing. If our children to-day are denied education, what is our India of tomorrow going to be ? It is the duty of the State to provide education for every child in the country. And I would add that it is the duty of the State to provide free education to every child in the country"

This was not all. Much more did he love them. Though immeasurable was his love of children, here is a measure of it, though rough and rude :³⁶

"I like being with children and talking to them, and even more, playing with them. For a moment, I forget that I am terribly old and that it is a very long time ago since I was a child. Old people have a habit of delivering sermons and good advice to the young. I remember that I disliked this very much long ago when I was a boy. So, I suppose you do not like very much either. Grown-ups have also a

35. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

36. *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*: Vol. two, p. 435.

habit of appearing to be very wise, even though very few of them possess much wisdom”.

To be with children was almost natural with him. Where would he like to go with children ? For he says :³⁷

“I would like to go there in the company of bright young children whose minds are opening out with wonder and curiosity as they make new discoveries. I should like to go with them, not so much to the great cities of India as to the mountains and the forests and the great rivers and the old monuments, all of which tell us something of India’s story. I would like them to discover for themselves that they can play about in the snow in some parts of India and also see other places where tropical forests flourish. Such a trip with children will be a voyage of discovery of the beautiful trees of our forest and hillsides and the flowers that grace the changing seasons and bring life and colour to us. We would watch the birds and try to recognize them and make friends with them. But the most exciting adventure would be to go to the forests and see the wild animals, both the little ones and the big”.

Of course, he feels that children should be wiser but in his opinion, they are wiser than their fathers and mothers. What happens as they grow up, he points out : ‘their natural wisdom is often eclipsed by the teachings and behaviour of their elders’. Studying a bit of child psychology, he observes rather characteristically :³⁸

“If you bring them together, they play or quarrel. But even their quarrelling is some kind of play. They do not think of their differences amongst themselves, differences of class or caste or colour or status. At school they learn many things which are no doubt useful but they gradually forget that the essential thing is to be human and kind and playful and to make life richer for ourselves and others”.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 439.

38. *Ibid.*, 439.

He resents the grown-ups' strange way of putting themselves in special compartments and groups, building up barriers of religion, of caste, of colour, of party, of nation, of province, of language, of custom and of wealth and poverty. "Thus", he says, "they live in prisons of their own making. Fortunately, children do not know much about these barriers which separate. They play or work with one another and it is only when they grow up that they begin to learn about these barriers from their elders".³⁹ Combining in himself a remarkable amount of naturalism, humanism and realism in his life's philosophy, he applies them all in every act of his. Herein lies the greatness of Nehru the man,—the synthetic, the integral personality of a rare type. To him the world itself is the greatest fairy tale and story of adventure that has ever been written. "Only" he says "we must have eyes to see and ears to hear and a mind that opens out to the life and beauty of the world".⁴⁰ How many of us will have this sense of sensitivity?

In his imaginative and dynamic approach towards children and their education, what he considers very essential is pre-basic training, i.e., training of the child, almost from the very moment of its birth, in character. To him, such a training of the child in character is of far more significance and of higher and greater importance than any training that can be provided for afterwards, because the child's character, as is very well known, is largely formed in its impressionable years—in the first nine or ten years.* Therefore, character training of children, forms an integral part of his scheme of education.

What Nehru values most is the human touch, be it in education or administration. While feeling anxious in realizing the ideals held, he points out :⁴¹

"Yet it is painful to feel all the time that while you hold the ideals, something comes in the way and you cannot go forward as you want to. There are so many factors in the world that you cannot control. The

39. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

41. *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*: vol. two, p. 561.

human material that you work with is not always good and there are your own failings to reckon with. Nevertheless, it is something to hold them and to try one's utmost to realize them and to give all one's strength and energy in that process till one is exhausted and is thrown aside".

WOMEN'S EDUCATION :

Does Pandit Nehru favour women's education ? Though education is no doubt spreading fast and changing the texture of our living, to him, it is the women of India who will progressively change the whole life of the people of the country—the greatest and perhaps the most revolutionary change through the enlargement of women's education. "Truly", says Nehru, "no argument is required in defence of women's education. For my part, I have always been strongly of the opinion that while it may be possible to neglect men's education it is not possible or desirable to neglect women's education. The reasons are obvious. If you educate the women, probably men will also be affected thereby, and in any event children will be affected. For every educationist knows that the formative years of a person's life are the first seven or eight years".⁴²

To Jawahar, the impact of women's education is far more widespread than that of men's, though he does not want to discriminate against any. However, he considers the training of the mother very essential for the sake of children, at any rate, if not for herself. His observation in regard to women's education is as follows :⁴³

"We talk about schools, and Colleges which are no doubt important, but a person is more or less made in the first ten years of his or her life. Obviously, in that period, it is the mother who counts most of all. Therefore, the mother who has been well-trained in various ways becomes essential to education. Most mothers, trained otherwise, I regret to say, are

42. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. Three, p. 393.

43. • *Ibid.*, pp. 398—399.

not good mothers. They are too soft. They stuff their children with all kinds of eatables, put too many clothes on them, wrap their necks and heads and ears with all kinds of woollen apparel and make the boy or girl almost an imbecile before he or she grows up. Therefore, it is necessary for women to be educated, if not for themselves at any rate for their children”.

The most reliable indicator of the country's character, in his considered opinion, is the status and social position of women, more than anything else. “That applies” says Nehru, “equally to the educational, social, economic and other fields”. In a different context he observed : “I am quite convinced that in India to-day progress can be and should be measured by the progress of women of India”.⁴⁴ Once, in his reply to debate on the President's Address in Parliament, he expressed his view :⁴⁵

“.....I would like to express my entire concurrence with that complaint and my firm opinion that women have not been given a fair deal in this country. Further, in future, it will be a matter of serious consequence to this country and to this House as to whether a sufficient number of women are returned or not. May I add that in the experience we have had in regard to the appointment of women in our delegations to foreign countries as well as in appointments made by the United Nations itself, I cannot think of a single instance where the appointment has not justified itself? I can, however, think of many instances where appointments of men have not been justified. Speaking from a good deal of experience, I can tell this House that women, who have gone abroad in our delegations and for other work, have, each one of them, raised the credit of India and left a good impression wherever they have gone”.

Should women go in for jobs? He thinks ahead of the times in regard to matters relating to women's education, .

44. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. two, p. 214.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

their status, their occupations, etc. For women, he could think of plenty of occupations which they could engage in, and which they do engage in. It may be that certain occupations are not quite suited for women which is a different matter. He endorses the modern view that 'women should not be kept away from most occupations'. He feels that everybody, man or woman, has got to be physically good and strong and mentally alert, and do creative, productive work.

He showed great concern for amelioration schemes for women. It was his feeling that 'our laws and our customs fell heavily on the women folk' and therefore, he was keenly interested in legislative measures which would bring about a certain measure of equality between men and women. He very much resented the prevailing customs under which different standards of morality are applied to men and women. That was why he showed much interest in piloting the Bill for Marriage Reform and particularly, bringing in the Divorce clause of the Special Marriage Bill. He was all for divorce by mutual consent. How does he meet the argument? He says :⁴⁶

"Some people say that if we have divorce by mutual consent, the husband will exploit the wife, will kick her out and force her to give consent. It is a possibility; it may happen as many worse things often happen. I do not think it will happen if you give time. If the husband does want to behave in that way, the sooner the wife is rid of him the better".

Should divorce be looked upon as something which makes the custom of marriage fragile? No. His view is :

"I do not accept that. If that is so, I say that marriage itself has become a cloak. It is not a real marriage of the minds or bodies. If you compel and force people in this way, it will just be an enforced thing which has no value left in ethics and morality. Certainly stop them from acting rashly. Give them time.

46. *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*: Vol. 3, p. 445.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 444—445.

Make attempts to bring about a reconciliation. If all that fails, don't permit a state of affairs which, I think, is the essence of evil, which is bad for them, which is bad for the children, bad for everybody. I would particularly beg the House to take the view that this clause about divorce by mutual consent, subject to time, subject to reconciliation, subject to all such approaches, so that nothing may be done in a hurry, is a right and proper clause. It will produce a happier adjustment and a better relationship between the parties than would be produced if one party thinks that he can misbehave as much as he likes and nothing will happen".

UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS:

In his address at the University of Saugar, Nehru explains, as though in very refreshing terms, the functions of a University : it is to produce creative minds. For he observes : ⁴⁸

"A nation cannot progress if it merely imitates its ancestors; what builds a nation is creative, inventive and vital activity. I seek the creative mind. How do creative minds come to be ? In many ways, I suppose. I know that the University of Saugar cannot produce creativeness; but what it can do is to provide an environment in which creativeness and vitality of mind and body have a place and can prosper".

His is a dynamic approach in relation to matters cultural, which are the domain of Universities. With his broad-minded vision of things, he could not tolerate people functioning in such a narrow way, that they should shut their minds and demand that others shut their minds too, against everything new and talk only of Indian culture. To him, who is truly cultured, 'those who preach that doors should be shut do not know anything of culture'. "Every process of exclusion" says Nehru "means lack of culture; every process of inclusion indicates growth. Those elements that

48. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. Two, p. 431.

believe in pushing things away narrow the mind and the nation falls back to a period of static culture. We have to be dynamic or else we cannot survive".⁴⁹ He proceeds further and says :⁵⁰

"To be dynamic and creative is the practical policy or the higher view of culture. It is fatal to sink into narrowness of mind inspite of the fact that, India has had a tremendously rich inheritance. How many of you have that dynamic approach and how many of you are thinking in terms of getting jobs here and there under the Government ? Whether you go into Government service or take up any other occupation, what is your ideal ? Just to earn a few hundred rupees ? Or is it to achieve something creative and good ? Are you just dragging on an unworthy existence for a number of years and doing nothing else ? That is a big question facing India. Whatever our virtues and failings—and a long list can be prepared of both—I believe in facing life in an adventurous way, in meeting life more than half-way without making a noise and without shouting".

Thus, Jawaharlal expects Universities, like Saugar, to aim at producing men and women who have the spirit of adventure and who do not flinch from difficulty. What he seeks in the eyes of the innumerable men and women when he goes round the country is, 'great and high ambition to do great things'.

Pandit Nehru takes it that "a University is essentially a place of culture, whatever 'culture' might mean". To him "culture, first of all, is not loud ; it is quiet, it is restrained, it is tolerant. You may judge the culture of a person by his silence, by a gesture, by a phrase or, more especially, by his life generally". He distinguishes between national culture and human culture but his stress is more on the human culture which is deeper than national culture. Pointing out the values of both, he observes :⁵¹

49. *Ibid.*, p. 434.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 434.

51, *Ibid.*, p. 427.

'Each country has certain special cultural characteristics which have been developed through the ages. Similarly, every age has a culture and a certain way of its own. The cultural characteristics of a country are important and are certainly retained, unless, of course, they do not fit in with the spirit of the age. So, by all means, adhere to the special culture of your nation. But there is something that is deeper than national culture and that is human culture. If you do not have that human culture, that basic culture, then even that national culture of which you may be so proud has no real roots, and will not do you much good'.

Being world-minded, he proceeds to think along lines of a 'world culture', which he says, is essential for us to develop, in addition to such national culture as we may have. "There is much talk of 'one world' and I believe" says Nehru "that, at some time or other, that talk must bear fruit or else this world will go to pieces".

At the Universities, Pandit Nehru, is particular, that there should be a stress on development of an 'integrated view of life', which he deplures, is absent to-day—we are narrower in our minds. That was the extraordinary thing which however, Nehru was puzzled to understand. In this context, he addresses the Universities to tackle this problem :⁵²

"If the Universities do not teach some kind of basic wisdom, if they think in terms of producing people with degrees who want certain jobs, then the Universities may have perhaps, solved to a very minor extent the problem of unemployment or provided some technical help or other; but they will not have produced men who can understand or solve the problems of to-day".

To Pandit Nehru, what really counts, if our country is to prosper, is the quality of our human material. The future of India, according to him, does not depend upon

52. *Ibid.*, p. 424.

her mere numbers or even on her past which is glorious, except in so far as future grows out of the present and the present grows out of the past. Though the country could make progress to some extent with people of mediocre quality, that is not enough for him. If a great country like ours is to be really greater, it is essential, he points out, that she should have men and women who must be more than mediocre. Therefore, he looks forward, naturally, to the Universities of the country, to produce such men of first-rate ability. Being always deeply concerned with the future of India, to him, the young men and women most of whom are in colleges and Universities, represent the future of the country. This is not all.

Nehru thinks of the University as an ideal place where men and women could find enough time to think, to consider ideals and objectives. Having this in mind, he observes :⁵³

“It is only in the peaceful atmosphere of a University that these basic problems can be adequately considered. It is only when the young men and women, who are in the University to-day and on whom the burden of life’s problems will fall tomorrow, learn to have clear objectives and standards of values that there is hope for the next generation”.

What does a University stand for ? Jawaharlal speaks like a first-rate educationist when he says :*

“A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for progress, for the adventure of ideas, and for the search for truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the Universities discharge their duty adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people. But if the temple of learning itself becomes a home of narrow bigotry and petty objectives, how then will a nation prosper or a people grow in stature” ?

53. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s Speeches, vol. One, p. 333.

What kind of a responsibility, therefore, rests on our Universities and educational institutions and those who guide their destinies? Observes Nehru: ⁵⁴

"They have to keep their lights burning and must not stray from the right path even when passion convulses the multitude and blinds amongst those whose duty it is to set an example to others. We are not going to reach our goal through crookedness or flirting with evil in the hope that it may lead to good. The right end can never be fully achieved through wrong means".

It may be worth-remembering that, Jawahar, like his master, Gandhiji, had held that 'there is always a close and intimate relationship between the end we aim at and the means adopted to attain it'. "Even if the end is right but the means are wrong," says Nehru, "it will vitiate the end or divert us in a wrong direction. Means and ends are thus intimately and inextricably connected and cannot be separated".⁵⁵

What shall be the basis and foundation on which the house of learning is to rest? says Nehru :⁵⁶

"The Universities have much to teach in the modern world and their scope of activity ever enlarges. I am myself a devotee of science and believe that the world will ultimately be saved, if it is to be saved, by the method and approach of science. But whatever path of learning we may pursue, and however profitable it might seem to us, there is a certain basis and foundation without which the house of learning is built on shifting sands. It is for a University to realize and to lay stress on this essential basis and foundation, those standards of thought and action which make an individual and a nation. Above all, this is necessary to-day, during this phase of extremely rapid transition, when old values have almost left us and we have adopted no new ones".

54. *Ibid.*, p. 383,

55. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. Two, p. 392.

56. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. One p. 529,

Being an uncompromising democrat, Nehru appeals to the youths in Colleges and Universities, to prepare themselves for the future trials—which are not yet over, ‘in the spirit of free and disciplined men and women, stout of heart and purpose, who will not stray from the right path or forget our ideals and objectives’.

VIEWS ON MISCELLANEOUS ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

SELF-DISCIPLINE :

More often than not, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid emphasis on ‘self-discipline’, which is the crying need of the hour. He was deeply concerned with the grave and much disheartening feature of the present day—a rapid fall in mental and moral standards. He preferred self-discipline to imposed discipline; but at any rate, he could not tolerate utter lack of discipline, which leads to chaotic conditions, whether they occur in a large way or in a small way. Since chaotic conditions cannot be tolerated, there must be discipline. “You may define democracy in a hundred ways” says Jawaharlal, “but surely, one of its definitions is self-discipline of the Community. The less the imposed discipline and the more the self-discipline, the higher is the development of democracy”. “Where there is no self-discipline”, observes Nehru, “another kind of discipline has to be imposed sooner or later”.⁵⁷

ON TRAVEL :

To Pandit Nehru, travel is much educative. As we all know, he is a widely travelled man. To him it was a remarkable social phenomenon of the times to see vast numbers of people travelling all round the globe, seeing other parts of the world and enriching their own mental outlook and horizon thereby. In his opinion, the vast hiatus between countries has to be bridged and one way to bridge that gulf is ‘through people getting to know other countries and other peoples’. The whole purpose of travel, according to

Jawaharlal, 'is to remove parochialism in our thought and in our approach to the external world'. "I believe therefore", says Nehru, "that travel is a powerful factor in helping to reduce difficulties in the way of people coming together. Travel organizations should devote themselves to this high purpose".⁵⁸ Travel and tourism, he holds, serve a much wider human purpose which is becoming increasingly important as the world becomes more and more closely knit together by communications.

The educative value of travel, holds Nehru, depends much on the person's mind—whether the traveller has a closed mind or a receptive mind, Says Jawaharlal :⁵⁹

"....although I travel a lot, I am not properly a tourist. I often wonder what impressions a person gathers when he goes to another country. Is that person's mind a closed mind or a receptive mind ? Is it made up or can it learn new things ? I suppose in every country there are things an outsider likes and many others that he dislikes because he is not accustomed to them. Much depends on how receptive he is. He will see, of course, the big buildings and the artistic treasures. But a country can be understood only by understanding its people and their background—not so much by its archaeological monuments and the like".

The sobering effect of travel, according to Nehru, is to understand other people's point of view. To be fixed in our own habits and view points and think that the other's habits and view points are absurd and wrong does not, in his opinion, denote a civilized outlook. What he particularly emphasizes in travel is that 'it is essential to know the background before forming judgments'. He elaborates it further and says :⁶⁰

"It is difficult for a casual tourist to get all this background. I myself want to get this background right whenever I go to a foreign country. I am chiefly

58. *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*: Vol. Three, p. 470.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 469.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 471.

interested in two things, first, the background of that country, and secondly the people. I am less interested in buildings, old or new, and the normal sights of a place. The great architectural or cultural accomplishments of a people interest me as part of the background that has thrown up the nation”.

When is travel good? He believes that one profits more if the above considerations are applied—knowing the background of the country and the people than if one rushes, here and there and has a rather mixed and hazy memory of the various things he sees. “Even then” says Nehru “travel is good. Travel is better still if the traveller goes out with a receptive and friendly mind, and travel is best of all if he is not only an ambassador of his own country but comes back from that other country as an ambassador of that country to his own. Then travel has fulfilled its function ”:61

In his *Discovery of India*, he aptly observes :62

“We in India do not have to go abroad in search of the past and the distant. We have them here in abundance. If we go to foreign countries it is in search of the present. That search is necessary, for isolation from it means backwardness and decay. The world of Emerson’s time has changed and old barriers are breaking down; life becomes more international. We have to play our part in this coming internationalism and, for this purpose, to travel, meet others, learn from them and understand them. But a real internationalism is not something in the air without roots or anchorage. It has to grow out of national cultures and can only flourish to-day on a basis of freedom and equality and true internationalism”.

APPROACH TO HISTORY:

The depth and richness of Nehru’s historical vision as already shown in his *Glimpses of World History* and ‘The

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 472—472.

62. Jawaharlal Nehru: *The Discovery of India*, pp. 580—581.

Discovery of India' is classic in itself and is known to every one. How does he understand History? Does he think and look at history from the old and out-of-date approach of a record of doings of Kings and battles and the like, or of social and economic progress, or of cultural progress, or the development of humanity as a whole? Whether it is the history of a single country or a nation or it is viewed in the context of world history as it naturally must be, inevitably, he says, the basis of all that is an accumulation of facts and records and data. Otherwise, he believes one simply builds one's idea of history on improvised knowledge without any reliable data. His approach to history is in a World perspective. For, he says, "It is quite impossible to-day to think of current events or of history in the making in terms of any one nation or country or patch of territory; you have inevitably to think in terms of the world as a whole":⁶³

He wants history to be taught in a very interesting and fascinating manner—not only to draw interest but inspiration, knowledge, understanding and all of them. He views history as the onward march of humanity, of the human spirit. He is against history being taught in dry-as-dust a manner. He expresses his resentment against this method of approach in the following words:⁶⁴

"But the whole conception of the history of a country being the names of a large number of kings and emperors, and our learning them by heart, I suppose, is long dead. I am not quite sure whether in the schools and colleges of India, it has ceased to exist or not, but I hope at any rate that it is dead, because anything more futile than children's study of the record of King's reigns and battles, I cannot imagine".

He is much drawn irresistably to the new approach of understanding history, which has now come to the forefront—the social aspect of history. His point is that history should evoke response from the average mind; otherwise he opines, history becomes narrow in its scope. "His interest

63. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, Vol. One, page 353.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

in history was not mere academic interest in things of the past and of long ago, but, an intense personal interest. Though his main interest was in science, he was drawn to history—history was in a way a fascinating pursuit to him. Naturally, he resents the old or out-of-date approach to history and expresses his dislike in the following manner:⁶⁵

“I must confess that even now, inspite of this acknowledged new approach, most of the books in history and papers on history that appear, interesting though the subject matter may be, appear to me to be quite singularly lifeless and dead. They are just the dry bones; there is no flesh and blood in them. And I suppose the only way really to read, write or understand history is to evoke in the mind a picture of a living society functioning, thinking and having all the virtues and failings which the human being has possessed, and gradually changing whether in the direction of progress or in some other.

THE ROLE OF FILMS AND OTHER COMMUNICATION MEDIA IN EDUCATION :

Pandit Nehru considers films—which are children's films as of high importance. Good children's films says Nehru, can be a very powerful instrument in developing the child. Nehru's approach to educating children is not dogmatic. For he says, “there is a tendency in our books written for children for the author to consider himself wise and give lectures to children on how they should behave and what virtues they should develop. My own reaction as a child to such lectures, as far as I can remember was to hit the person lecturing. That is not the way to approach children. By lecturing you inevitably drive children to evil ways. Don't sermonize too much. There are subtler ways of pointing a moral or drawing a lesson. Good children's films can be a very powerful instrument in developing the child and I hope that the Indian film industry will think of this”.⁶⁶ He is particular that what is presented through

65. *Ibid.*, p. 355.

66. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. 3, p. 412.

films should mould public taste, apart from the fact that public taste, to some extent also moulds what is presented to it.

He admits that the cinema, is one of the biggest influences in the modern world. At the same time, he does not minimise the influence of other media of communication—mass media. He observes :⁶⁷

“There are many other things which influence people—books—newspapers and so on. But I think it is perfectly correct to say that the influence of the films in India is greater than the influence of newspapers and books combined. I am not at the moment talking about the quality of the influence . . . when I said that I was not referring to the quality, I meant that books, for instance, not newspapers so much, would obviously have a greater and deeper influence on those individuals who can take advantage of them. The cinema will not have that effect on them, nor the newspapers. In that sense, book reading is an influence powerful in its quality, provided one knew how to read and what to read. But quantitatively the number of book readers in India is pitifully and woefully small. It makes me sad to think what a small number of people in India read books, judging from sales. It is astonishing how backward our publishing business is”.

He is struck at the astonishingly small total circulation of newspapers in each of our languages, though he does not deny that there are fine newspapers in various languages in India. What distresses him most is the small total circulation of all the newspapers in India in all the languages, compared to the population of the country. Though literacy figures are low in the country, yet in the totality, people who are literate in India are vast in number,—by no means an insignificant figure. “What is it, then,” deplores Jawaharlal, “that ails our writers of books, or publishers of books, or readers of books or newspapers? Why is there this hiatus?”

He does not want too much Governmental interference in artistic activities. "But Government must", observes Nehru, "inevitably be concerned with something which has such a wide influence. Suppose our producers produced a war film which encourages the war mentality. The Government of India would come down upon it with a big thump and stop it. There is no use telling me that we are interfering with the liberty of the individual. I just do not want war propaganda in India to thwart young people's minds. So I say there are limits. There must be broad agreement on the main principles of such restraint among Government, society and the industry itself. There may be difference of opinion as to where the line is to be drawn".⁶⁸

What are Jawaharlal's views regarding censorship of films? He says :⁶⁹

"I am, I am sorry to say, still affected considerably by old nineteenth century traditions in regard to such matters. I do not take favourably to too much restriction or too much censorship. On the other hand, it seems to me quite absurd for any one to talk about unrestricted liberty in important matters affecting the public. The invoking of some high principle in favour of censorship or against it has no meaning to me except that, broadly speaking, one should not restrict and interfere. But the State has to interfere to an extent in some activities. I might mention in the case, let us say, of what are called "horror comics". The horror comics are something which, I am absolutely clear in my mind, should be suppressed ruthlessly. They are a hundred per cent, bad, and they are causing, in some countries, all kinds of sadistic impulses, like children just murdering for murders' sake, to have the pleasure of seeing a person killed. Obviously, no Government or society ought to allow that kind of thing to flourish. The freedom of the individual is not involved at all. It is clear

68. *Ibid*, p. 411.

69, *Ibid.*, pp. 408—409.

that the Government must take action to prevent something from spreading which it and society consider evil".

Though he is not for too much control or rigidity in the matter of films, he expects some kind of a restraint on the part of the producers of films, so that they may have a sobering effect on the public. "I do not take kindly to too much regulation and regimentation", says Pandit Nehru, "or too much protocol, specially in matters which obviously are of the spirit, like music, dance and literature".⁷⁰ His point is that creative arts must be allowed and encouraged to grow with as little interference as possible. "It is only when they manifestly become a social menace or a social danger", says Jawaharlal, "that Government must move, and move with a firm tread". What a crusading zeal !

CO-ORDINATION OF THOUGHT AND ACTION :

To Pandit Nehru, the co-ordination of thought and action is very essential. In spite of the fact that he was busily engaged in many activities, he never lost sight of this fundamental principle of establishing a proper reconciliation between his activity and his thought. To him, thought without action is abortion. Action without thought is folly". "The happiest man", says Nehru, "is he whose thinking and action are co-ordinated". He further points out that it is true that poverty makes one miserable in a very acute way. But my point is that it is not wealth but co-ordination of one's thought and action which removes inner conflicts. It is in that way that integration of personality is achieved".⁷¹

How humble Pandit Nehru is, becomes evident when he says :⁷²

"The more I thought and the more I learnt the more I saw how little I knew and much more there was to learn. One of my regrets today is that I have no

70. *Ibid.*, p. 409.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 472—473.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 474—475.

time to pursue these studies, properly by reading or thinking or writing, because writing for me is essentially an aid to thinking. In trying to write, one has to think more concisely than otherwise”.

How is one to develop thinking ? Does it come automatically to a person ? His answer is :⁷³

What I would like you to do first of all is to think. Thinking is something which does not come automatically to a person. Gossiping with a neighbour is not thought. If you repeat something which somebody else has said, it is not thought. I do not expect all of you to become mighty thinkers, though some of you may. But I would like all of you to think and to develop the art of thinking. Nothing is more helpful to thinking than reading, that is, reading intelligently, because thereby you get other people's thoughts, and by weighing them you can think yourself. I have often said that it is very unfortunate that people think and read so little now-a-days, especially in India. I do not call newspaper reading reading. But any reading which makes you think is useful reading, even if it is a very good novel. Great novels always make one think, because they are pictures of life painted by great minds”.

QUALITY AND DEPTH :

Mere material progress does not fascinate Jawaharlal. His concern is with something far more valuable—quality and depth. In education, he takes care to emphasize the importance of providing the widest possible cultural background so that the narrowness of spirit and mind would be removed. What he is worried about is whether people have the depth that they should have, because, says Nehru, “that is more important than the mere passing of examinations”. Creativeness, productiveness, a certain sincerity of purpose, a certain depth, are the very things, which he would emphasise in an educational institution. “We can

73. *Ibid.*, p. 475.

build up a great university," observes Jawaharlal, "great in the sense of big buildings and equipment and all that, but it is very difficult to build up traditions, to build up an atmosphere which surrounds a place, and to build up memories which are so powerful in guiding and in affecting our minds and hearts".⁷⁴ Speaking about the importance of quality and depth, he observes :⁷⁵

"But what I am concerned with is not merely our material progress, but the quality and depth of our people. Gaining power through industrial processes, will they lose themselves in the quest of individual wealth and soft living ? That would be a tragedy, for that would be a negation of what India has stood for in the past and I think, in the present time also as exemplified by Gandhi. Power is necessary, but wisdom is essential. It is only power with wisdom that is good".

He stresses most the qualities of head and heart when he says :⁷⁶

"Can we combine the progress of science and technology with this progress of the mind and spirit ? We cannot be untrue to science, because that represents the basic fact of life to-day. Still less can we be untrue to those essential principles, for which India has stood in the past throughout the ages. Let us then pursue our path to industrial progress with all our strength and vigour and, at the same time, remember that material riches without toleration and compassion and wisdom may well turn to dust and ashes. Let us also remember that "Blessed are the peace-makers".

In a different context he stresses the importance of quality in this way :

74. *Ibid.*, p. 437.

75. Inaugural Address, Azad Memorial Lectures: pp 42—43.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Refer Jawaharlal Nehru's Address to the Special (Silver Jubilee) Convocation of Lucknow University, Jan. 28. 1949.

“It is important that the quality of mind should be there..... But after all, it is the quality of the mind that counts even with courage and daring”.

APPEAL TO THE YOUTHS OF THE COUNTRY :

The sporadic outbursts of students' violent behaviour every now and then, which is now-a-days a common feature in several Indian Universities, has always made him sick and he resented it very much. He utilised every available occasion to appeal to the youths of the nation to be sober and to restrain themselves by projecting problems of the country before their minds—the nation in the making. Pandit Nehru in his Address to the Special (Silver Jubilee) Convocation of Lucknow University, makes a special appeal to the graduates in a very vivid language. The fervour of his appeal is as follows :⁷⁷

“When the young generation on whose shoulders the great task of carrying India a stage farther on her long journey is going to fall, when that young generation behaves in a manner which is incomprehensible to me, it amazes me. They talk of taking part in politics, and this or that, I am amazed that when the whole of India is shouting for work, shouting for labour, shouting for building up, they think in other directions, they work in other directions and they talk in a language that I do not understand”.

Hooliganism and mob-violence of all kinds that have recently happened in Bhubaneswar and other places only show the lack of self-restraint and self-discipline among our students in Colleges and Universities. Why all this unrest ? To Panditji, all these were familiar things in his days and his reaction to these incidents is very remarkable indeed. He observes :⁷⁸

“So the essential thing is how to develop that psychology of work and co-operation among the people. And to-day, if we are suffering from anything in India,

77. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Vol. One, pp. 360—361.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 371.

it is the absence of that right psychology. Whether it is in the worker, whether it is in the owner of the factory or whether it is in the younger generation, it is entirely a wrong psychology. It is a psychology that assumes that results can be achieved by strikes and demonstration and the rest. And I am sorry to say that people who ought to know better are somehow taken in by it and somehow encourage this kind of thing. I tell you I consider nothing more dangerous for India's present and India's future than the continuance of this psychology".

Quite disapproving mass exhibitions of hooliganism by students, he expresses his resentment thus vehemently :⁷⁹

".....We should not stoop to any low means, we should not stoop to any violent means, we should not stoop to any vulgar means. We are not going to make our country great by exhibitions of vulgarity and lowness of action and sporadic violence. Violence is bad enough when nations indulge in it against one another in war. But violence becomes infinitely worse and degrading in the narrow domestic sphere of street violence and the like".

Rightly does he emphasize that education is not to be looked upon as a time for demonstration of violence, when they (students) are to know better. For he hits at the nail when he says :⁸⁰

".....because India is going to be run by a large number of trained people in future and ultimately, as everywhere else, by a relatively small number of A-Class men in Technology and Science. Ultimately, a country's standing in the world is obviously judged not by the number of people it has, crores and crores, it is by the number of top-ranking men and women it has, who show results, who can give a proper lead, and also by the number of eminent men it has to carry on the work of a large country. It is

79. *Ibid.*, p. 379.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 376—377.

a certain quality that counts in the end, not quantity, although quantity also is necessary in a certain measure. Do you realize that it is out of you that will or ought to come those top-ranking men and women? But if education is looked upon as a time for demonstration—unless as I said the nation is in peril and everything has to be set aside—you do not get prepared for the future”.

THE LIFE OF THE MIND:

In his address at the UNESCO symposium⁸¹ he refers to the Concept of Man. According to him the ‘modern world is getting completely out of tune with.....the life of the mind’. “Yet, the modern world” observes Nehru, “is entirely the outcome of the life of the mind. After all, it is the human mind that has produced everything that we see around us and feel around us. Civilization is the product of the human mind and yet, strangely enough, one begins to feel that the function of the mind becomes less and less important in the modern world, or at any rate, is no longer so important as it used to be. The mind may count for a great deal in specialized domains; it does and so we make great progress in these specialized domains of life, but, generally speaking, the mind as a whole counts for less and less. That is my impression. If it is a correct impression, then there is something radically wrong with the civilization that we are building or have built”.

What distresses Nehru most is the deterioration of the mind—preventing the mind from functioning as it should and as perhaps it used to do in the earlier periods of the world’s history. “If that is true,” laments Jawaharlal, “then surely, it is not a good outlook for the world, because the very basis on which our civilization has grown, on which man has risen step by step to the great heights on which he stands to-day, the very foundation of that edifice, is shaken”.⁸²

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, as we all know, has been a great admirer of the achievements of modern civilization, of

81. Jawaharlal Nehru’s Speeches: Vol. Two, p. 380.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

the growth and applications of science and technology, besides himself being a student of science. Referring to the achievements of sciences, he says : "Humanity has every reason to be proud of them and yet if these achievements lessen the capacity for future growth—and that will happen if the mind deteriorates—then surely there is something wrong about this process. It is obvious that ultimately the mind should dominate..... If the world suffers from mental deterioration or from moral degradation, then something goes wrong at the very root of civilization or culture. Even though that civilization may drag out for a considerable period, it grows less and less vital and ultimately tumbles down..... And so I wonder whether something that led to the fading away of relatively high cultures is not happening today and producing an inner weakness in the structure of modern civilization"⁸³

ON MUSEUMS:

Pandit Nehru attaches much importance to museums as places of educative value. It is not many who realize it to be such. Why are museums necessary? Says Nehru :⁸⁴

".....museums I think are necessary from a variety of points of view and some of the most exhilarating times that I have spent have been in museums—not in this country but chiefly in Europe—and I have always been sorry that I could not spend more time there".

What exactly a museum is, and what purpose does it serve? Answers Nehru :⁸⁵

"I suppose it is some kind of congealed history or a bit of the past locked up in your cabinets and placed so that you may have a glimpse of it. It is a place

83. *Ibid.*, p. 381.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

85. *Ibid.*, pp 375—376.

where you collect beautiful objects and it is good to have beautiful objects for people to look at.... It is quite extraordinary how people are losing any real appreciation of beauty. What is the reason? :... , but the fact remains that we are becoming more and more shoddy. What is worse, however, is that we sometimes seems to take pride in this fact. Therefore, it is desirable to collect articles of beauty. Even in a matter like children's toys, may I ask why they should be given horrible golliwogs as presents? I do not know..... Why not have beautiful things and why not train them in the appreciation of beauty from their childhood instead of giving them toys which are caricatures of what they see? Such toys no doubt excite their curiosity but, at the same time, make them insensitive to beauty. Because of this tendency, which appears to me to be growing throughout the world, because of this lack of appreciation of any kind of beauty, it is desirable to collect articles of beauty from the past and the present, so that we may at least have some standards to judge by and so that the people who come to the museums may see for a while articles of beauty, even though they may not generally see them in their daily lives".

Pandit Nehru, it is obvious, looks at the museum as congealed history—one aspect of the museum. He does not want people to go to a museum, as it invariably happens, 'just to see odd things oddly displayed, just to see as an oddity, something that existed five hundred or a thousand years ago'. He does not want a museum to be an odd thing, unconnected with the life the day or the world. In connection with the museum, he refers to the teaching of history which has a good correlation and says : "It must somehow be connected in a series—something of the past leading to something else and that some thing else leading to the present .—Then alone can history live for us".⁸⁶ Incidentally he makes a passing reference to how he was fascinated by his-

•86. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

tory and the method he adopted to learn history. It is quite revealing when he says :⁸⁷

"I do not know how history is taught because, at College, I hardly learnt history in the normal way. I read it myself and, therefore, my reading was not guided by experts at all. It was casual, though widespread reading and I was fascinated by it. My fascination for history was not in reading about odd events that happened in the past but rather in relation to the things that led up to the present. Only then did it become alive to me".

Pandit Nehru, it may be remembered, had a penetrating vision of history and his two books : 'Glimpses of World History' and 'The Discovery of India' are classic examples of a monumental nature,—unequalled in their depth and richness of historical vision.

It is quite illuminating when he applies the principle of continuity to the museum and says :⁸⁸

"A museum which is really meant to interest and educate must be something which connects its objects with the things the visitors are used to seeing in their lives and in their environments. It should not be just a symbol of the distant, unconnected past It is not the normal antiquarian's view of things. An antiquarian is necessary of course, to collect these antiquities but an antiquarian who himself becomes an antique piece is not much good. He must have some relation to the modern world. Then only can we make antiquity a living reality in terms of the modern world It seems to me incorrect for us to treat any period of the past as something cut off from subsequent periods or from the present and if I look at it that way it does not interest me much. If there is the slightest connection between that and my present-day thoughts and activities it is a blessing and a matter of interest to me".

87. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

He is particular that a museum should convey to us some idea of the larger scheme of life—ultimately leading to or at least helping in a better understanding of the present scheme of things. He is particularly attracted to the typical museums in the West,—represented by Deutsches Museum of Munich and some other Museums in Paris and London, where he says, ‘one can see modern life, modern activity, the growth of science from the pre-scientific period’. “Such Museums” points out Pandit Nehru “are fascinating and contain more education than years of courses in College or University. They also represent something I should like to see grow as part of general education and School or College education”.⁸⁹ Will our Indian educators awake themselves to this ?

True to his role as India’s great educator of public taste and public thinking Nehru wants museums, whether they be museums of antiquity or those of modern life to be visited by larger and larger numbers of people and that they should learn from them. He does not want museums, as they usually are in this country, to be confined to the visiting Directors of Museums from other countries. Explaining the main purpose of museums, says Nehru :⁹⁰

“More and more people should come and learn and, in fact, facilities for learning should be provided. That is to say, some arrangement should be made for lectures to be given to ordinary folk who come there and for guides to explain to them what these things are and arouse their interest in them, especially school children and college boys and girls. That is the main purpose of museums. I would not very much mind if no adult came to the museums, because his mind is made up and is not always capable of learning much, but in the formative period of childhood and youth, it is essential that people should come to museums and learn. Their minds will be affected by the objects which they see there. I should like this aspect of education through the museums to be

89. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 371.

developed, not by appeals to the public but by encouraging and inviting people to come, inviting not only the people, who would normally come but also those who would not otherwise come, persuading them to bring their children and explaining things to them so that they may widen their vision and feel that the world is a bigger thing than they normally believed it to be”.

Will the museums in India expand and flourish in the direction indicated by Pandit Nehru ?

NEHRU'S VISION OF TOMORROW'S INDIA :

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been known to us—the present generation, as essentially a man of action. But was he a dreamer ? Yes, he was. But he was not an ordinary dreamer. Then, what else did he dream of ? His vision at once presents before us as may be put in his own inimitable language : ⁹¹

“What will emerge from the labour and tumults of the present generation ? What will tomorrow's India be like, I cannot say. I can only express my hopes and wishes. Naturally, I want India to advance on the material plane, to fulfil her Five-Year Plans to raise the standards of living of her vast population, I want the narrow conflicts of to-day in the name of religion or caste, language or province, to cease, and a classless and casteless society to be built up where every individual has full opportunity to grow according to his worth and ability. In particular, I hope that the curse of caste will be ended for there cannot be either democracy or socialism on the basis of caste”.

His mind in its greatness conjures up the vision of something vast—the prosperity of India's millions—‘the mighty theme of a nation building and re-making itself’. What kind of an idealism does his dream or vision of Tomorrow's India connote ? For he envisages : ⁹²

91. Jawaharlal Nehru: Azad Memorial Lectures: p. 41.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

“To-morrow’s India will be what we make of it by to-day’s labours. I have no doubt that India will progress industrially and otherwise; that she will advance in science and technology; that our people’s standards will rise; that education will spread and that health conditions will be better; and that art and culture will enrich people’s lives. We have started on this pilgrimage with strong purpose and good heart, and we shall reach the end of the journey, however long that might be”.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN

PROBLEM OF THE MODERN STATE :

Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice-President of India, is one of the greatest educationists of the country to-day who has rendered so much service to the cause of education and is the father of many schemes which are probably current to-day in our educational institutions. In the building up of the edifice of national education, which is never complete, particularly in a social and secular democracy like that of ours, he points out that 'education, true education, is the life breath'. In such a basis of our national existence, which is gradually evolving itself, the process of integration does not end with the mere integration of administrative units; it is a continuing process. In the old society in India, the diversity of educational ideas found their essential unity in religion,—in many cases varied ideals found a shared basis in a common religious belief. "This is not possible", says Dr. Zakir Hussain, "in a secular society, for the comprehensive society which contains the various sections and communities and professions is not a religious unity." Therefore, 'what kind of education is best suited for secular India of to-day' is examined by Dr. Zakir Hussain, in his own characteristic but masterly way. While examining it he observes:¹

"To hammer into shape an educational ideal of the older kind, valid for all as a mould into which each citizen's mind could be poured and shaped, would be an absolutely hopeless enterprise. It would be stupid to attempt it in a democratic society with its myriad individual

1. Dr. Zakir Hussain, '*Educational Reconstruction in India*' Sadar Vallabhbhai Patel Lectures, Fourth Series, Broadcast over A.I.R. Dec., 1958, Publications Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1952, p.

aptitudes seeking to develop and grow in order to contribute to the evolution of a morally free and autonomous personality”.

In his considered opinion, it is a mistaken notion that “education must be the shaping of the educand according to a given generic type, according to a ready-made educational ideal with a sharp delineated content”. A democratic educator should realize, says Dr. Zakir Hussain, that “education is not a pressing into shape but a letting loose and setting free which respects the unique and specific individuality of the educand. It gives him an opportunity and presents him with a challenge to enunciate a concept of education which can be the basis of educational reconstruction in a secular social democracy”. The future of our people will depend, affirms, Dr. Zakir Hussain, “in no small measure on the ideas and principles which inspire Indian education, and on how its evolution helps in the growth and development of the democratic way of life, on how it provides for the full growth and development of individuality, and on how it harnesses, harmoniously-developed individuality to social ends, on how it probes into the secrets of the self, and how it masters the mysteries of selfishness”.²

Much of the ‘talked-of educational reform and educational reconstruction’ is nothing but a change in name, not much improvement in quality and content but for considerable increase in quantity as per statistical indications. What is very often evident is, an expansion of the educational apparatus without a corresponding, full and operative consciousness of its real aims and objectives and without a close correspondence between the ends and the means adopted for their realization. Dr. Zakir Hussain makes a very pertinent observation when he remarks :³

“....—then mere tinkering with administrative detail, by adding a year to one stage and subtracting it from another, by the ad-

2. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 10

3. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

dition of a subject here and a subject there, by the replacement of bad text-books by, if possible worse, by giving to existing schools a different name, and so on, the immense challenge of educational reconstruction will not be met".

Then, how to meet this challenge? According to Zakir Hussain, a saner reconstruction of our educational edifice will require 'a deeper and more widespread understanding of the nature of education and of the functioning of a democratic society'. The problem of modern State, he says, is 'one of educating all its Citizens to-a sense of nationhood and to enable them to fill a place worthily in it'. He is fully aware that the stupendous task of education for everybody, education for all the children of all the people is necessitated by the radically changed circumstances of modern times,—the growing complexity of social organization and industrial life, the pressing urgency of creating new social organs, to ensure the unity and efficiency of the people. In this connection he observes : 4

" Specially in the particular situation of our country, which is striving to build up a structure of democratic living in a secular welfare State, the need for this education for all is absolutely essential. For a democratic society does not only have to work for the realization of ideas and plans prescribed by others, but each one of its citizens has to contribute as 'a fraction of the national arbiter' in the framing of the design of national life. A democracy has to rely on individual initiative and not on direction from above. Its discipline is self-discipline and not an imposed discipline. Co-operation, persuasion, and the exercise of disciplined initiative depend on mutual understanding and large-hearted toleration, which are essential conditions of democracy. One of its most difficult tasks is that of

4. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 68.

educating every citizen to the sense of a common national ethos”.

Thus, a little reflection makes it obvious, that according to Zakir Husasin, the most potent instrument, if the democratic State has to do something to keep itself together, is *education*. But who is to determine the aims of the public education system? He makes it clear in the following passage :⁵

“ No imposed pattern arbitrarily stamped on a living moral being, however efficient by certain standards, can be education as we have defined it. If, however, the State modestly and quite rightly regards itself as an evolutionary stage towards the perfect moral State, whose constant endeavour is to pave the way to the development of a free moral personality for its citizens.....then the State can legitimately set the aims for its schools”.

CONCEPT OF EDUCATION :

What is true education, according to the distinguished educationist of the country? “At the very outset,” says Zakir Hussain, “We should rid ourselves of the all too generally held notion that education is putting information into an otherwise empty head. No, education is not a dressing up, it is not writing on a *tabula rasa*. It is not the imposition of just this system of training or that system of garniture, decided, all but arbitrarily, in view of a certain industrial or economic survey or in obedience to the dictates of a certain political ideology.”⁶ In his view, as any rational person will agree, the basic principle of education in a democracy should be “ reverence for the individuality of the child, the child is to grow into the citizen, upon whose full development and intelligent and willing participation in making it a more and more just and more and more morally perfect social organism the very fate of democracy depends”.⁷

5. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 70.

6. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 11.

7. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 11.

Dr. Hussain feels that the competence to discharge duties of a citizen,—both to himself and to society as well, can only be the direct result of ‘aptitudes discovered and developed to their fullest by education’.

What does Dr. Zakir Hussain mean by ‘education for citizenship’? Says he, “To educate a person as a true citizen is to make him the instrument of helping his State to become the realization of the ethical ideal of the Just State. It will be no true education to harden the citizen into habits and ways of thinking and doing and reacting that would render the present imperfect State indifferent or hostile to its own evolutionary growth and satisfied with its present defects, consuming in the process of living all the good elements in its constitution and leaving behind but a dark and dismal precipitate of the Absolute Evil, in which the roots of nothing good can find their nourishment”.⁸

Reviewing the educational situation in India, Dr. Zakir Hussain observes: ⁹

“Indian education has been like a stagnant pond for quite a while, and with freedom to something about it, so many new ideas have been flung into it that waves seem to cut across each other in an almost bewildering complex pattern. Those responsible for education are anxious not to give the feeling that they ignore new ideas and if an idea has not to be seriously worked for, then its acceptance is the easiest thing to do. It makes good headlines and one gets the flattering feeling that much is happening in education. Not infrequently this is a very false sense of self-satisfied complacency. My own impression is that there are, at the moment, many fruitful ideas in Indian education, but none of them, literally none of them, appears to me to have behind it that energy, that drive, that preparation, that

8. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 71.

9. Zakir Hussain: op. cit. p. 112.

sense of urgency, that sincerity of purpose which can promise its effective realization”.

Dr. Zakir Hussain's basic principle is ‘that the mind to be educated is the individual mind’ and that the ‘food on which it has to thrive and develop consists of the goods of culture that surround it—all of them concretizations of the mental effort of other minds’. In the education and development of the individual human mind, he proceeds from infancy onwards,—the operation of the physical and psychical functions as a result of the bundle of instincts with which the individual human mind comes to the world. As the child begins to exercise these physical and psychical functions, Zakir Hussain says, he experiences his first satisfactions and his first disappointment. ‘He begins to like actions and things, to evaluate them, to set values on them. This process of evaluation, of associating positive or negative value with his experience is as fundamental to mental growth as any other. As these evaluations accumulate in the child's memory, a great step forward is taken in the mental life of the child—the consciousness of Ends and Means is awakened’.

As soon as the child starts aiming at things and actions which he likes and values, Zakir Hussain says, ‘the child adopts means to reach those aims and to experience those values attached to them’ and gradually the ends to which value is attached increase in number. It is at this point, that Dr Zakir Hussain, develops a concept of ‘Values—Ends—and—Interests’, and he explains it as follows: ¹⁰

“ The effectiveness of means in the attainment of the valued ends rivets the interests of the child on these means. They too become valuable on account of the valued end they subserve. A system of Values—Ends—and—Interests develops and gives to the growing individuality its peculiar mental structure”.

• 10. • Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 13—14.

SYSTEM OF VALUES—ENDS—AND—INTERESTS :

Dr Zakir Hussain observes, that the whole system of Values—Ends—and—Interests, as experienced by the human individuality in the early stages of development are exclusively sensual material values—remaining on the sensual level only, whereas in later stages of the growth of the individual mind, a third group of functions (apart from the physical and psychical as mentioned earlier) begins to operate, which may be called 'the intellectual and the spiritual'. "The satisfaction of those functions", says Dr Zakir Hussain, "also leads to an experience of values, but these are values of quite a different order from those just mentioned. These bring with them a particularly satisfying sense of permanence and absolute worth and validity. They press for commitment. They insist on being realized. No sooner have they gripped us, they become the predominant and decisive elements in shaping our scale of values. Sensual values are cheerfully subordinated to them. They transform and transmute".¹¹

What does Dr. Zakir Hussain aim at, in education ? A truly democratic education, according to him, only seeks to develop a free moral personality through the process of letting the mind develop its own system of values by active contact with the goods of culture,—the creations of similar minds and embodiments of their cherished values. "This process", he says, is, "possible only in a society that respects human personality, regards it as an end, and hopes to build the perfection of the whole on the fullest possible development of what is specific to each part".¹² He is bold enough to call that a "pseudo-effort" of another kind, which 'does not aim at letting the part grow and develop to its possible perfection but at forcing it into an arbitrarily determined shape and stamping it into an externally prescribed mould'. Therefore, it is his considered opinion that "education in the hands of unscrupulous and absolute authority is a weapon fraught with grave dangers to true human development.

11. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 14—15.

12. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 113.

The question, how to get rid of such authority, is really not only or even principally an educational question, it is a social and political choice of a most comprehensive and a momentous nature”.

Education, says, Zakir Hussain, has to do with what one becomes as well as with what one can do.¹³ “It is, indeed, concerned with the skills”, he observes, “but even more so with the objectives to which the skills contribute. It should seek to shape the totality of the educand’s being. The school, therefore, that aims at the realization of the growing moral and intellectual self can hope to achieve this aim only if it grips at every turn the whole of this growing self, that is the entire values—Aims—and—Interest Systems of the educand. The more and the oftener it can do this, the more effectively will it have a total impact on the pupil’s development”.¹⁴ “Education in the truest sense of the word”, defines Dr. Zakir Hussain, “is helping the mind of the educand to experience these absolute moral and intellectual values, so that they in turn urge him on to be committed to realize them, as best he may, in his work and in his life”.¹⁵

CONTACT WITH GOODS OF CULTURE :

Zakir Hussain, sets great store by the so-called goods of culture, the contact of which, is absolutely necessary for the proper development of the individual mind. “These goods of culture,” observes Zakir Hussain, “are the only means of setting the educational process into motion; they are the only food for the nourishment of the human mind.” How can these goods of culture be used to advantage, so that they could become *educative* goods ? In this connection, Zakir Hussain remarks:¹⁶

“The encounter with these cultural goods is mediated by the home, by the school, the institutions of higher learning, the public institutions, and the all-embracing activities and examples of public life.” The growing

13. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 113.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 15.

16. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 16.

mind takes hold of them, unconsciously at first and more and more deliberately later, and uses them for its specific human development”.

However, he makes it clear that, it is not every mind that can make use of the same cultural goods for its proper cultivation. He attributes this to the fact that every individual has from birth his own specific way of reacting to the world of men and things around him. In particular, he traces this to the peculiar configuration of his physical and psychical functional dispositions,—his native individuality. “On the foundations of this original individuality”, argues, Dr. Zakir Hussain, “hardly susceptible to any significant change, is built up, with the help of the objective culture in which it lives and moves and has its being, a more developed individuality, a *Lebensform*, a life-form as Spranger has called it. Education is the individualized subjective revivification of objective culture. It is the transformation of the objective into the subjective mind. It is an individually organised sense of values awakened by goods of culture which are embodiments of the values accessible in the experience to the person concerned.”¹⁷

Of all the principles of education, that which seems to appear to Dr. Zakir Hussain, to be of special significance for a democratic society and at the same time, the most commonly ignored in all educational organisations is ‘the principle of individuality’. This, he calls, the basic axiom of the educational process,—‘that the cultivation of education of the individual mind is possible only by means of cultural goods whose mental structure wholly or at least partially corresponds to its own mental relief’. “The specific mental constitution of the educand”, observes the distinguished educationist, “namely, his individuality, determines his original indigenous system of Values—Ends—and—Interests. These are directed towards goods of culture which are the products of similar mental constitutions, embodiments of similar values, achievements of similar ends and realization of similar interests”.¹⁸

17. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 17.

18. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 18.

How to open the door to culture ? Dr. Zakir Hussain makes superb observation when he says :¹⁹

“The original technical—practical interest of an active boy may well grow into theoretical and aesthetic and even religious interest. But, by and large, you cannot hope to educate the theoretically inclined boy or girl except through the theoretical goods of culture and you can bring him to a more or less effective understanding and appreciation of the other regions of culture also primarily through theoretical goods. The true culture of the mind of an aesthetically gifted pupil is possible only through goods of the aesthetic type. One would attempt in vain to educate him through goods representing a theoretical or practical mental structure. The door to culture can be opened for him only by means of the goods of the aesthetic type. Once this door to culture is opened by the key specially suited to a certain pupil, many avenues may lead into the vista, for regions of culture are not isolated islands entirely detached one from the other ; they are joined to each other by a thousand connecting links..... we cannot hope to cultivate the mind of a colour-blind person through masterpieces of painting. We knock in vain to open out before most of our children bursting with practical activity, the windows to the cultivation of the mind by means of theoretical instruction”.

INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITIES:

To what extent can great personalities be helpful in contributing to the cultivation of other minds ? Dr. Zakir Hussain, the eminent educationist observes in this regard :²⁰

“a great personality, can make its contributoion..... only through the basic attitudes of a social mental structure—through sympathy, love, confidence and

19. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 19—20.

20. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 27.

reverence. Even personality can speak to us only in our language, the language of our soul, which is the language of our specific mental constitution. Entirely alien structures represented in a personality are beyond our comprehension and we can pass by such a personality without being any the better for it. Personalities embodying mental structures analogous to our own can grip us as few things can, and help us in the course of our intellectual, moral and spiritual development. The basic axiom of education is the congruence and correspondence of the mental moral structure of mind of the educand and the structure of the goods of culture serving to educate, cultivate and develop it. "Culture", as Simmel has well said, "is the path of the mind's sojourn from a narrow closed unity, through an unfolding, expanding diversity, to a developed, expanded unity".

But one wonders, to what extent, we can succeed in securing identity of personality or goods of culture to the typified educand of Dr. Zakir Hussain's description. Well and good, if such a close correspondence could exist or could be established. Does it not presume certain ideal conditions ?

Zakir Hussain, as has been already referred to, upholds the fundamental principle of 'individuality in education'. He applies this principle in education in due consideration to the stage of development of the educand. "In this connection, how superb is his observation !"²¹

"The process of education is a continuing process in which the journey is as important as the destination. For, indeed, one never arrives? Every stage in it has its importance and significance. It would be thoroughly mistaken to consider the various stages as merely preparatory to something that is supposed to happen at the remote end. A rather early and elementary stage in the progress of education, graduation or, well, getting a doctorate, is raised to the thoroughly undeserved pedestal of being the end, where one

21- Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 27.

might stay out making the rest of the life-long adventure of education almost meaningless and vitiating with almost vicious thoroughness the enchanting and energizing march through the earlier stages in which enough strength could have been built up for the equally, perhaps, more exciting journey ahead”.

PULLING AND PUSHING; BAD IN EDUCATION:

It is his considered opinion, that the ‘immediate can be sacrificed to the ultimate in education only at the latter’s cost’. He endorses the view of the great German educational thinker, Schleiermacher, that ‘all preparation must at the same time be satisfying experience and all satisfying experience also a preparation’. Thus, according to Dr. Zakir Hussain, the means and ends, both have equally important significance in education. He is not for speeding up, in the matter of pupil’s mental growth. Aptly does he say :²²

“It should be the concern of every well-organized system of education not to seek officiously to influence the speed of the pupil’s mental growth. If the school is not to be a training factory for producing men as if they were machines designed to perform pre-determined jobs, if it is a place of education, as it well might aspire to be, it should provide for the development of maturity of every stage in the pupil’s growth and also be vigilantly on guard lest it misses the evidences of the onset of the next stage. For pulling and pushing can both be disastrously bad in education”.

Zakir Hussain, is in full accord with Kerschensteiner, who has in his *Theorie der Bildung*, characterised three chief periods of development in early life, each of seven years’ duration—the first upto seven years of age, the age of play ; the second from 7—14, the age of egocentric interests of work ; and the third from 14—21, that of hetero-centric interests of work. Following this analysis of Kerschensteiner, he points out that ‘each stage should be respected in its own right and not made subordinate to the succeeding ones’.

This is quite reasonable. It thus becomes obvious, that Dr. Zakir Hussain follows his line of thinking which is based on the principle of individuality of the child', depending essentially upon the specific stage of development of that individuality which leads on later to the 'principle of totality',—of the indivisible totality which education ultimately seeks to form. He ventures to spell out the following salient features in the different stages of the individuals' development :²³

"The spontaneity of play and its carefree objectlessness should not be destroyed in order to train in skills. Play is its own end ; We could, if we were wiser and not only older, so direct his play that he might, in the course of his pleasurable activity, by repetition of actions or otherwise, develop a certain skill in their performance and this might serve in the succeeding period of work as means for the fulfilment of his self-set aims Play may not be sought to degenerate into a task"

" In the age-group 7—14 the school should provide for satisfying the active practical urges. It may arrange the work projects in such a manner that without depriving the pupils of the satisfaction that would come from the exercise of their practical technical and social urges, the foundations of theoretical and contemplative activity at a later period are, perhaps, also laid. The opposite tendencies, observable in most school systems of premature forcing of the talented, usually prompted by highly educated parents who want their child to have several tries at competitive examinations, and the unimaginative exercise of bureaucratic uniformity which seeks to hold back the hare to march in step with the tortoise, both offend equally against the consideration due to the actual stage of development of the child"

INFORMATION AND SKILL ; NOT EDUCATION ;

Dr. Zakir Hussain, defines his concept of education as an 'inner formation and not an outward addition'. That is the

23. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 29.

reason why, he does not believe in the 'false idea of stuffing the mind with information or the ambitious snobbishness of the isolated development of the intellect'. He has no regard for those who are simply 'content with instruction and care nothing for education'. He is rather emphatic and rightly so when he says, that 'information and skill are not synonymous with education'. He goes a step further and exclaims : "I will take that risk, for I mean what I have said. Indeed, information and skill are not even reliable measures of education. In order to make them serviceable as such, we must make a distinction".²⁴ To put it in a nutshell, information and skill are additions from the outside,—it represents an external appendage only; whereas, education would represent an enrichment and transformation from within,—it signifies an internal development.

"The principle of Totality", according to Dr. Zakir Hussain, "demands that the educative act should have a total impact on the educand. Educational measures should be directed, that is, to the development of the whole mental structure and not to that of only an aspect or part thereof".²⁵ He emphasizes the basic principle of Pestalozzi: the 'organic unity of the educative activity'. That is to say, education should seek to shape the totality of the educand's being. "In order to render this possible, the school", observes the eminent educationist, "besides being a place of imparting something to pupils, should also be a place of intelligently observing and understanding them".²⁶ How to bring this about? Dr. Zakir Hussain's answer is :²⁷

"In the training of our teachers for various kinds of school, they should be provided with the technique of such competent observation as will enable them to understand their pupils and direct their educational work on them in the light of this understanding. But no amount of training can help to bring this about as effectively as a normally intelligent, understanding

24. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 45.

25. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. p. 31.

26. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 33.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

and loving intercourse between teachers and their pupils on the playing field, in excursions, and mutually helpful productive work in and out of a school consciously organized as a community of work and life. The insight that this will give into the true interests of the pupils can, however, be put to fruitful educational use only if the school in its organization has taken cognizance of the variety of interests as well as the prevalence of certain common interests in a certain age group”.

ACTIVITY AS AN EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLE OR THE WORK-SCHOOL:

It may be remembered that Dr. Zakir Hussain the eminent educationist, as President of the Committee of Educationists appointed at the First Conference of National Education held at Wardha in 1937, gave concrete shape to Mahatma Gandhi's scheme of basic education,—now the national goal as far as primary education is concerned. For the past more than two decades or so, we have been flirting with the ideas of the ‘work-school’ as the case of our national educational edifice,—that work is the most important instrument of education. What does Dr. Zakir Hussain exactly mean by the principle of activity as an educative act ? To quote Dr. Zakir Hussain :²⁸

“In a sense, no school, in any age, has been without some self-activity by the pupil. Even the most cruel drilling in reading, writing and arithmetic and the most passive storing, in memory of lumps of information stuffed into one's head by others' grace, had to be accompanied by some self-activity. But it was, at best, an accidental accompaniment of something that was not aimed at or considered of much educational importance”.

Zakir Hussain divides activity into four kinds; play activity, sport activity, casual occupational activity and work activity. About each of these he observes :²⁹

28. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 35—36.

29. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 29—40.

“Play is an activity which is its own end ; it has none outside itself. It is play for the sake of play. • It does not aim at *anything* outside the child or any *quality* in the child. It is its own reward.....

“Sport, on the other hand, is an activity with an objective, the objective of increased efficiency and facility in certain movements and actions. But sports also does not seek to produce anything outside itself. Its aim is inherent in it and is signified by the championship or the record as indications of superior efficiency.....

“As against these two, the other two forms of activity, casual occupation and work have distinctly definite objectives, to realize ; they are never ends in themselves. They aim at the concrete objective realization of some idea. Casual occupations and hobbies have their motive in the result of the concretization as well as in the activity involved..... It stops when the pleasurable of the activity ceases, or as soon as the work is about complete in some form or the other. Activity that originates in play and stops at mere casual occupation is the fertile breeding ground of the dilettante. The chief purpose of the educative process is to lead it on to the fourth form of activity, namely work”.

Can we indiscriminately regard all work as education ? Far from it. All work is not educative, although educative work is the greatest source of real education. This might seem paradoxical. But how does the eminent educationist elucidate his remark as to what he means by ‘educative work’—work, that is, that helps in the cultivation of the mind and in the shaping of character and personality.³⁰ Zakir Hussain’s elucidation of the concept that ‘work is the most important instrument of education’ is as follows:³¹

‘..... that the educative in work, even manual work, is the mental activity involved which may not

30. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 41.

31. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 53.

be neglected except at the peril of depriving work of all educative quality ; that work is educative, for it can be used to develop habits or careful and methodical thinking ; that it is educative if it is objective and if is actuated by the urge to perform it to possible perfection ; that its educative function is greatly enhanced by the opportunity of the self-criticism of the result of work ; an opportunity which finds its easiest, although by no means its only fulfilment in manual and technical work”.

How is one put on the road to true education ? Dr. Zakir Hussain answers superbly as follows :³²

“For it is only in earnest work that the worker aims, not at just any result, but at as perfect an attainment as possible of the result aimed at. Unfinished, careless, slipshod work, whatever else it might be, is surely not educative. Perfect attainment, and perfection is itself one of the highest formal values. Some work is more suited to bring gradually the experience of this value of perfection than some other work. It is easier, in the case of work whose results lend themselves easily to effective self-criticism by the worker. Technical work, for instance, enjoys this advantage in a very extraordinary degree”.

What is the role of ‘spontaneous activity’ in his scheme of studies ? It is his firm conviction that any kind of mental work which, when spontaneously undertaken, develops habits of careful and thorough thinking. In this connection his observation is quite pertinent :³³

“The purposes of spontaneous self-willed work do grip, as it were, one’s whole being and themselves supply the urge to acquire a good deal of traditional knowledge and a good deal of mechanical skill if the progress in the pursuit of the spontaneous purposes is not to be disconcertingly slow. Traditional knowledge and mechanical skill will, therefore, al-

32. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 50—51.

33. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 47.

ways have a place in educational work but only when they come in to fill the gaps of knowledge acquired, or sought to be acquired, by direct experience, or of skill attained or sought to be attained through creative work. Educative work has to be constantly reinforced by traditional knowledge and mechanical skill”.

He makes it clear that manual physical work, accompanied however much by eagerness and interest and exertion, can *not* be educative work, if it does not issue forth from a preparatory mental activity, as an essential first ingredient of some manual work which helps to make it educative. “As the manual activity progresses”, remarks Zakir Hussain, “the first conclusive intellectual step may be subjected to revision and reinforcement or change, but it must precede all educative manual work. Purely mechanical work, isolated from the rest of the worker’s mental life, can never be educative. Nor is sheer imitation educative unless it is at least preceded by a comprehension and understanding of what has to be imitated”.³⁴

Dr. Zakir Hussain critically evaluates Work Schools quite succinctly in the following passage :³⁵

“Work which is mechanical, work in which no mental exertion is involved, work in which one is satisfied with just any result and there is no constantly prodding urge to aim at its possible perfection, work in which there is no self-criticism and so no real progress, is in no sense educative. Schools that have such work are not work schools in any sense”.

At the present moment, in India, all primary schools are basic schools—work schools, even if they are not, they are gradually being reoriented to the basic pattern. But, on reflection or on a self-analysis of the working of these schools, how many of them would answer to Dr. Zakir Hussain’s description ? Is it not a patent fact that many of the Work Schools or the so-called Basic Schools as they are

34. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 41—42.

35. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 86.

functioning to-day in the country are, just mechanical schools of Dr. Zakir Hussain's description ?

According to Zakir Hussain, work that is educative has normally four stages :

- (1) The clear consciousness of the problem, what exactly, is to be done ;
- (2) the formation of a plan of work, the choice of appropriate means, thinking out the various steps in which it has to be accomplished ;
- (3) the actual execution of the work ; and
- (4) self-criticism of the result of the work done in the light of No. 1, namely, what exactly has to be done. These have been called the four steps of objectification.³⁶

Dr. Zakir Hussain affirms that in manual work of an educative nature, mental exertion is also involved or implied ; that is to say, only the actual execution of the work is manual whereas, the other three steps or stages do involve some kind of mental exertion. "In the case of work that is not manual", says Zakir Hussain "all the four steps consist principally of mental activity. This mental activity which may accompany a piece of manual work or the resolving of a moral situation by a definite choice, or the solving of a theoretical problem, has a distinct value in training the mind to tackle similar problems more easily and with greater confidence when they occur later".³⁷ He, however feels, that the intellectual book-schools neglect to provide the necessary conditions for the exercise of this mental activity. He goes a step further and asserts that 'any school, whatever emphasis are reflected in its programme of work, will not be a place of education, unless it provides ample opportunity for this kind of activity, this kind of work'.

What is the *most* that Dr. Zakir Hussain claims for the 'educative value of work ? It is that 'it affords opportunity of mental activity which alone can help to form in the

36. Cf. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 42.

37. *Ibid.*

educand the utterly necessary habits of careful, consequent and logical thinking. This is a formal training of some functions of the mind, it produces a mental, intellectual skill'

In his opinion, 'skills and qualities can be recognized as fruits of true education only if they are acquired and can, therefore, be used in the service of objective values'. He is in full agreement with Kerschensteiner's definition of education as 'an individually organized sense of values awakened by the goods of culture. His chief emphasis is no doubt on the 'goods of culture', for he says, that it is in them that these objective values are incorporated and kept stored. "It is through them," argues Zakir Hussain, "the growing mind can experience those values, and the latent energy stored in goods of culture is transformed into kinetic energy in the subjective mind. He endorses the view that "all work of the hand or of the mind in which the worker seeks to be objective is educative work". He equates objectivity with morality. "...What else is ethical behaviour" argues Zakir Hussain, "but readiness to prefer the objective norms to the subjective inclination and interest? Objectivity aims only at the perfect realization of values. Objectivity is impersonality".³⁸

What is the hallmark of an educated person? says Zakir Hussain :³⁹

"The characteristic mark of an educated man should be a positive attitude towards the goods of culture, that is, towards the ultimate objective values. That attitude should be the cherished product of educational and institutional activity".

Dr. Zakir Hussain's free paraphrase, with a negative tail-end of the five unmistakable signs of a truly educated man, as per Kerschensteiner's illuminating study *Begriff der Arbeitsschule* is simply superb. To quote his own words:⁴⁰

38. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 50.

39. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 48.

40. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 49.

- " 1.He has no blinkers.
- " 2.He is no Philistine.
- " 3. He is not conceited and never imagines he has reached the destination.
- " 4.He is not a hard-boiled egg.
- " 5.He is no internally dissipated busy body".

URGE FOR REALIZATION AND FOR PERFECTION :

Dr. Zakir Hussain, in his concern for the principle of activity or the so-called 'Work School', stresses most the essential qualities of the absolute values,—that they create an urge for realization and for perfection. His point is a 'school that seeks to make work educative can never do too much to provide the most ample opportunities to its pupils of the joyful and stimulating experience of the value of perfection, of bringing something, some task, however small, as near to perfection as possible and not leaving it till that has happened'. "The urge towards perfection", he opines, "will be initiated in many a case by ego-centric and not objective motives. But the experience of achieving something like perfection will, by frequent repetition, most likely succeed in transforming this motive also. The moment this happens, the urge to penetrate into the nature of every means conducive to the attainment of the perfect results becomes almost irresistible"...⁴¹ It is his confirmed opinion, that while one is engaged in this exhilarating experience, the 'original subjective ego-centric motivation gets submerged under an unqualified commitment to the various values and to the formal value of perfection with reference to them'.

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

While emphasising the proper mental and moral development of the individual mind, he is not for its being done

⁴¹. Zakir Hussain: op. cit.' p. 51.

in complete isolation from the society of which it is a part. His very idea that the 'development of the individual mind was to be produced by its association with and assimilation of the cultural goods of the society in which it is placed', establishes 'a silver link, a silken tie' between the individual and his society. As a natural corollary, he postulates, as an objective of education, the 'steadily growing approach of society to a better and juster and more graceful way of life. "The individual mind", he points out, "we must readily admit, cannot grow to its fullest possibilities without a corresponding advance of the collective social existence. One who aims at excellence in the individual must almost inevitably aim at it and look for it in society".⁴² To him, isolated individual development and barren moral eminence, are only isolated specimens of sterile excellence. Therefore, it is worth quoting his pertinent observation : ⁴³

"If the individual were to confine himself to his own mental, moral and spiritual growth and to engage in raising the edifice of culture in his own individual being, and chose to be indifferent to what happens to society, 'how far and how effectively the absolute values are realized in social organization, he might well succeed in perfecting his own spiritual being. But if his example were to be generally accepted, all roads to the culture and education even of the individual will become dark and dreary lanes to a waste land, and the self-centred, highly spiritual, morally free and autonomous personality will, perhaps have to perch, high and dry, on some rock in the waste land contemplating nothing more edifying than the tip of his nose".

What is the social obligation that is implied in the individual? He says, that "in a democratic society it is essential that the individual who is obliged, for his nourishment in body, mind and soul, to the co-operation of fellow-citizens should cheerfully share the responsibility of making

42. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 54

43. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 54—55,

the life of society a better life, both morally and materially'. He stretches his imagination farther when he says : ⁴⁴

“ The allegiance to higher values has to be given not only in individual life; society too has to be helped to own allegiance to them in its organized social existence. And among the potent goods of culture which when experienced and accepted make possible an individually organized system of values, a good and just society, a clean political life, and an honest leadership devoted transparently to the general good are themselves forces of the highest educative value ”

What he implies is the principle of 'individual and social mutuality', which he says is seldom kept in view in the organization of our education. He feels that education for 'social responsibility' should not be considered a trivial thing in our concern for intellectual advancement. “ In order to educate for social responsibility”, he observes, “ these institutions should themselves be organized as units of community living. . . . one learns to serve by serving in society. Unless this principle becomes the life-breath of our educational institutions, all other reforms will be just patchwork. For how else will the moral value of a sound social organization be experienced except by living as a member of such an organization?”⁴⁵ He endorses the view which is gaining ground that 'real experience of social living in a school community is essential for education in social responsibility and for using it even as a means of social betterment. Though he does not foresee the immediate possibility of having 'residential school communities for all children any where' but he visualizes the possibility of 'organizing its schools as communities of work and shared objectives, without necessarily having to make them boarding schools',—the social concern of education. He advocates the organisation of our educational institutions as units of community living, as communities of work, manual and mental, and as communities of shared values and shared standards of excellence'. He is

44. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 56.

45. Zakir Hussain; op. cit., pp. 46—57.

quite confirmed in his view that the 'full growth of the individual mind and the moral vigour and development of the collective social existence go hand in hand'.

FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION :

Whether in the matter of education, the individual shall be left completely free or limited by authority and if so, to what extent, are matters, on which opinions among educationists differ. That being the case, how does the eminent educationist in question, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice-President of India, view this particular aspect of education? For he observes : ⁴⁶

“ My own feeling is.....one is inclined to forget that the way to real freedom goes over a good deal of directed effort. A school totally without direction and authority may prove to be a foolish and, what might be worse, a fruitless venture. No, there is no road to education that spins round and round the self in spite of all the spontaneity in the world; there is none from the potential to the realized human personality that does not pass through society and its culture. Only in gradual and judiciously selective contact with these and in the activity engendered in assimilating them is the individual mind awakened and enabled to discover the law of its being. The nursing and fostering of the creative and the spontaneous in the child have to go hand in hand with breeding and discipline that past achievements and examples afford”.

Thus it is quite obvious, that Zakir Hussain emphasises the absolute need for proper direction in the education of the individual as a morally free personality. He does not favour unchecked freedom to the entire exclusion of authority in education. Nor does he favour absolute authority, as the basic principle to pervade our educational activity. His pertinent observations in this regard are worth quoting : ⁴⁷

46. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 38.

47. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 60—61.

“The long traditions of intellectual authority, uncritical acceptance, unquestioning conformity reinforced, if anything, by the pervading concepts of education as the imparting and acquiring of ready-made information—symbolized in the almost religious attachment to the scriptures known as ‘Examination Notes’—and training in mechanically prevalent fear of spoiling the child by sparing the rod and the over-powering urge to save him by its fulsome use—all these seem to imply that authority is the basic principle pervading our educational activity to the exclusion of freedom.

What about the other side of the medal ? He argues in the same brilliant vein : ⁴⁸

“The licence that students are allowing themselves in what they do and in what they leave undone, the uncontrolled obsessions, distractions and dissipations of which they give frequent evidence in their behaviour, viewed against the pathetic apathy, indifference or complacency of the teachers: the angry young men and even the angrier younger ones on the one hand, and the unconcerned, blissfully detached or dejected and defeated teachers (when they themselves are not classified as the ‘angry young men’) on the other—all seem to indicate that in this free land of ours education subscribes much too totally to the principle of ‘Wachsenlassen’ or ‘Letting Grow’—if we cannot let them grow to bring forth flower and fruit, just let them grow into weeds”.

Having placed the cards on the table, Dr. Zakir Hussain briefly states his view on the matter as follows: ⁴⁹

“Freedom and Authority in education are, in my view no contrasting opposites. For, there is no authority in education without the inner freedom which recognizes it, and there is no freedom without

48. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

49. Zakir Hussain: *op. cit.*, pp. 61—62.

regulation and orderliness which is felt as authoritative. If authority signified forced compulsion and freedom stood for just licence and arbitrariness, they would indeed, be contrasting opposites. But there is no community—be it a family, a school, a state—which, however much it prized freedom, had no rules and regulations that were recognized by the constituent members as binding and therefore authoritative. There is no autonomous personality conceivable without principles which could keep the animal instincts and urges in check to enable the human mind to go about its higher business in freedom. Without such regulative principles, society would be a chaotic jumble, personality a slave to animal desires and appetites”.

He does not preclude the rare cases of individuals being left free to themselves from childhood without direction, conceivably coming to such regulative principles on their own ; but he holds that coming to them will be by a very very long and a very very hard road, indeed, and ‘there might not be enough time left’ for them to put the discovery to much use. He aptly observes :⁵⁰

“The individual is helped by society to go through a stage of outside authority before it reaches that of true self-determination. The road to freedom is made by authority. To cut out authority altogether would be to cut out the road”.

What is the real question then in education? Is it a question of Freedom versus Authority? How does the learned authority in education view this aspect of education? Dr. Zakir Hussain remarks :⁵¹

“The real question that concerns education is really not one of either—or, it is the problem of determining how long external guidance and authority is essential to reach the agreed end of self-determination. How long might authority last, how soon shall

50. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 62—63.

51. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 63.

freedom take over—for take over it must, if the development of a morally free personality is the end”.

He is led to believe that, there is an authority at the beginning of education and an authority at the end also. What is the nature of this kind of authority? He explains it as follows:⁵²

“The authority at the beginning is the authority of age and experience, of affectionate guiding and sympathetic guidance, unfortunately with some possible unpalatable sanctions attached to superior strength which a good school does everything to keep in the background. At the end is the authority of values freely experienced and freely accepted in the personal and impersonal goods of culture”.

Dr. Zakir Hussain's ideal view is that ‘a general acceptance at a fairly early stage of the need of orderly and smooth working of the educational activity and of the need of subordination and integration in the educational organization should not be difficult to achieve provided the matter is not left to chance’. According to him, true education is not happening till ‘an insight into and a reverence for the values education stands for and the values the teachers might represent, are engendered in the individual,—the educand. Dr. Zakir Hussain upholds the following ideal of education : ⁵³

“The business and the privilege of the educator and of the school or College as an educative community is to guide and help and direct the young in their charge in such a way as to develop in them a sense of responsibility for their actions and their omissions and to awaken in them an irrepressible urge towards self-education and, to the extent they succeed in these, to give them the fullest measure of freedom and self-determination commensurate with such success. Easily said, but hard work for

52. *Ibid.*

53. Zakir Hussain:: op. cit., p. 64.

generations of good teachers. I hope and trust they will be forthcoming”.

How can fruitful ideas in Indian education materialize? In the opinion of the distinguished educationist, “an idea does not materialize only by being talked or written about or even by having a considerable sum of money in its name. It requires the intelligent and devoted endeavour of numberless people determined to see it through. It demands a vigilant and consistent follow-up; it involves a number of inevitable consequential measures”.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF A GOOD STATE AND THE COMPULSORY PUBLIC SCHOOL :

Dr. Zakir Hussain sets forth the following two kinds of aims before a good State, if it is to be really mindful of its moral destiny :

(1) the egoistic aim of peace and security inside, defence against aggression to assure its continued existence, and care of the physical and moral well-being of its citizens; and (2) the establishment of the One Human World or the Federation of Mankind by itself growing morally to be an effective instrument of bringing it about in co-operation with like-minded peoples.* “The State” contends Dr. Zakir Hussain, “educates to get good and useful citizens fit to pursue its two-fold purpose. It educates with a utilitarian and an ethical motive.”

Keeping the above mentioned, two-fold objectives of a good State, he enunciates that the compulsory public school will have the following aims : ⁵⁴

- (1) “the first thing it will aim at will be to educate the citizen for some useful work, for a definite function in society commensurate with his capacity and aptitude.
- (2) “The second aim will be to make of vocational education a moral experience and to bring home

Refer: Educational Reconstruction in India—Dr. Zakir Hussain (The Patel Memorial Lectures).

*54. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 72—73.

to the educand as vividly as possible that a vocation is not only a source of earning a living but is, indeed an office of public service in an organized co-operative community and should be placed in the service of the growth and development of a moral social order.

- (3) "The third aim.....will be to awaken in the growing member of society the desire, and to develop in him the strength, to make a start on the long and enchanting journey of building up his own personality and to apply it to the moral perfection of society to which he belongs. It will make him realize that the cherished ideal.... can advance towards its realization only by the harmonious working together of morally free persons".

The distinguished educationist is quite convinced that the majority of those who will go out of the schools,—in all probability, they may not continue their education further after leaving school, should be given as much preparatory skill in mental and manual operations as would be required for their filling in their place in society efficiently and well—to fill a place where manual work is the predominant activity. He feels that an ordinary theoretical book school will not be the school to fit this vast majority for their station in life. Therefore, what type of school will suit them? "The school meant for them" he says, "should be a school where manual work is the chief instrument of educative activity". "What about the minority," one may ask? "For those who have to fill the comparatively smaller number of intellectual occupations" answers Dr. Zakir Hussain, "one could suggest a different focus for the schools".

He is emphatic that a properly organized school of work will deliver the goods. In such a school of his conception, mental work is an essential and a most important part of educative manual activity. The school that would set out to establish in the country will have to be a school of work, mental or manual, and till such time as the pure breed of theoretical intellectuals can be reliably sorted out at that age,

a school where manual work shall be the centre of educational activity'.

He has no bone of contention that this school of work will suit all categories, —rural and urban population, agricultural and industrial occupations and will be found useful for subsequent manual or intellectual fields of activity. It is his firm belief that 'this school of work can, therefore, serve as an effective base of education for vocations of both the manual and the intellectual type',—of course, subject to the proviso that 'when properly organized'. One may rather start wondering, whether the so-called work schools, as they are functioning in the country to-day for the past so many years, are really properly organized, as they ought to be. It is only at this point sceptics begin to argue and differ.

What Dr. Zakir Hussain expects of these ideally run,—properly organized work schools, is : ⁵⁵

"It will have equipped its pupils, as they go out of it, with habits of work, of logical thinking out of their work projects in numerous problem—solving activities, of carefully reflecting on the possible means of doing their work, of doing the work undertaken with the best possible care, of exercise in subordinating their subjective whim to the logic of the object, of expressing the joy of aiming at and achieving a degree of perfection, and finally of learning the sure way to better success by the self criticism of their achievements".

What does he mean by a properly organized Work School?—schools as communities of work and life. He points out : ⁵⁶

"This community should stand out as the embodiment of moral ideals suited to the age of its members. This Community of work can stand for a noble-minded comradeship ; in the active finding out of the unknown and in the discovery of truth, natural and historical ; in the appreciating and crea-

55. Zakir Hussain : op. cit., p. 75.

56. Zakir Hussain : op. cit., p. 76.

tion of beauty; in upholding standards of a clean life; in helping the helpless; in courageously speaking out one's mind; in accepting the duty of the best possible in accomplishing the tasks assigned; in the readiness to work for and to stand back, if necessary, for the good of the school-community, to play for the team and a number of other ideas can consciously form the basis of such a community. Work in such a community becomes service and builds up....., character”.

Dr. Zakir Hussain does not exhaust his description of a work school with the above statement. He further elaborates it beautifully as follows : ⁵⁶

“ In the busy atmosphere of the community of work with its varied and manifold fruitful contacts a certain social sensibility and a certain delicacy of feeling will be developed which are extremely valuable ingredients in the formation, again, of that character. Another quality, that of responsibility, will find a fertile field of growth in this Community”.

He makes no doubt that ‘children who have experienced the unspeakable joy and the rewarding satisfaction of having worked in such a set-up are bound to seek and find it in the work of later life. He is earnest and wants us to be earnest in creating such school communities—in devising ways and means of doing this not in the case only of rather expensive public schools, but in our schools of all the children of all the people. “Our best educators”, says Dr. Zakir Hussain “should apply their minds to converting the compulsory Indian School into a real community of work”. ⁵⁷

WHAT IS WRONG WITH OUR SCHOOLS OF WORK OR BASIC SCHOOLS ?

Dr. Zakir Hussain, it may be remembered, was the chief architect behind the Basic Scheme of Education in the country,—he gave concrete shape to Mahatma Gandhi's scheme of basic education. Now, what is his view about

57. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

the original scheme of basic education, which is the accepted national ideal, atleast at the primary level? Observes the distinguished educationist : ⁵⁸

“ Now, my view about the original scheme of Basic Education has been and continues to be that it is abundantly sound in principle and appears to me, by no manner of means, to be unfeasible in practice. I have personally experienced its principles worked out successfully. But with the limited knowledge that I have of its working as a widespread system of elementary education in the country I can say that it has, in most cases, not been given a fair trial. Its basic ideas have not been adequately elaborated, a requisite preparation to put them into practice has not been made; those responsible for the implementation of the scheme have in a large number of cases not applied themselves to the task with the required energy in a single-minded manner; teachers and inspectors have not usually received the requisite training ; a generally, prevailing dichotomy between Basic and Non-Basic School working at the same level has betrayed or atleast been interpreted as evidence of a divided mind in places which are important for the shaping of educational policy; the irksome absence in a number of places of the proper and mutually understood relationship of the Basic School with other educational institutions—the high schools and the Universities—has engendered the crippling feeling that Basic Education is a meddling intrusion in an area of complacent and restful placidity. These and many similar factors have not allowed Basic Education to be given a fair trial”

It is a well-known and recognized fact, that the public is rather critical about the functioning of the work schools, otherwise known popularly as basic schools. The feeling of the populace is, that Basic Education has not yet delivered

58. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 107—108.

the goods. Is it justifiable? Has Basic Education really failed? How does Dr. Zakir Hussain, the eminent educationist, face the challenge? He observes : ⁵⁹

“How could a scheme of education of such far-reaching significance and based on such manifestly sound educational, psychological and sociological foundations be declared to have failed before it has really been honestly tried. Much, indeed is being attempted and, as ideas get clarified and as prejudice dies down, much more will be done. I hope, more effectively and more successfully, Education is, in any case, a plant of slow growthwe have not succeeded in putting an end at once to the weeds that have been growing long enough, indeed, in the educational field, whose failure as healthy plants is patent. No, Basic Education cannot be said to have failed. It awaits being honestly tried : ”

He is anxious to see that the scheme is tried fully and uninhibitedly in order to find how it works out and whether it confirms or contradicts his view of it. That seems to him the only proper way to proceed. According to him, ‘it presupposes genuineness, honesty and a little patience’.

While he is quite convinced about the soundness of the scheme of basic education as such, he is not blind to the loopholes. He does not say that ‘all is well with the basic schools. He is critical and rightly so, when his remarks are based on his fairly extensive observations and on the impressions they have left on his mind’. He aptly remarks : ⁶⁰

“.....I venture to share with you my feeling that we have, by and large, not achieved what might have been easily attainable in properly organized Work Schools. There are many reasons, most of an organizational nature, but there is one very important educational reason, and that is that

59. Zakir Hussain: *op. cit.*, p. 108.

60. Zakir Hussain: *op. cit.*, pp. 83—84

in these schools we have generally not kept in view the essential educative conditions of work The work is extraneously and uniformly prescribed, there is no semblance of a spontaneous motivation in the child, he is supremely ignorant of any personal or social purpose behind his work. He starts with no interest except perhaps, curiosity and the appeal of doing something with his hands. He begins with no problem he has to solve. He naturally does not get any opportunity of thinking out his problems, for he, indeed, has none. He does not have to think out any possible alternative methods of solving the non-existent problem. He is told to do it in a certain prescribed way and is denied even the stimulated joy of a joint discovery with the teacher. He is occasionally made to work—usually not regularly—and those who make him do so are usually satisfied with any result”.

Dr. Zakir Hussain paints a beautiful picture of the show and window-dressing that is usually maintained in Basic Schools when the Inspector or a VIP or a Basic-Education-Wallah happens to visit the institution. Regarding the actual show that is put up, he puts it imaginatively as follows : ⁶¹

“ One finds taklies and Charkhas plying, with suspiciously fat windings of fairly good yarn already on the taklie or the spindle frequently in the hands of pupils whose yarn is thick and uneven and breaks all the time you stand by them. It is the casual result of occasional activity being superimposed on the comparatively better results of a few boys or teachers who know how to spin well ! If the teacher senses that the visitor will become more impressed with the quantity of previous output than with the doubtful quality of the present result—and some of the clever teachers develop almost an electronic sensitivity in this behalf owing to the much

61. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 85.

too frequent visits of V.I.Ps. who usually don't have much else to do—he shows him a respectable heap on a table in the corner covered with a rather dirty piece of fine foreign cloth. If the visitor is curious or just wishes to show an intelligent interest and has no obsessive dirt-phobia, he, perhaps, lifts that conjuror's cloth and finds underneath it a tortuous, suffering, disintegrating, untwisting, dust covered-jumble of what, perhaps once was some kind of earth wormish cotton yarn, passing, it would appear, in purgatory to get back to its original sinless cosy state of being just a short staple cotton filament”.

The picture of Basic Schools,—stray samples or even more, as the case may be, as painted in the canvas by Dr. Zakir Hussain, is no doubt realistic. That is why, he is sympathetic with the concern about the comparative inefficiency of our educational institutions in general, as places of real moral and intellectual growth. He deploras that ‘moral and intellectual standards are, by general admission, on the decline’. He is particular that the business of education should be to ‘pave the way to its transformation into earnest work which insists on the best possible result, and ever better result, till perfection is reached’. He is not happy till the Basic Schools cease to be the ‘Show-Cases’ as they are at present—until things are set right in a positive manner.

He is not unaware of the other organizational difficulties facing Basic Schools in general, which are in a way responsible for their poor performance and comparative inefficiency. By way of pointing out some of them casually, he observes:⁶²

“The Basic schools are not infrequently treated as unwelcome intrusions in the placid atmosphere of Indian education. Boys and girls going out of the Basic schools find it difficult, in some cases impossible, to get into other higher schools. So Post-Basic schools are established for their benefit—

62, Zakir Hassain: *op. cit.*, pp. 86—87.

just a few and far between. Then when a boy finishes his Post-Basic School he is not. able to go to a University, for Universities cannot be asked by government to admit him. The Universities, verily, are autonomous bodies !. This shows lamentable lack of co-ordination in educational work, and something must, indeed, be done soon about it".

The passage quoted above shows, only too clearly, how greatly Dr. Zakir Hussain is concerned with the problems and difficulties of Basic Schools, be they organizational or otherwise. It is high time, that the much lamented 'lack of co-ordination in educational work', is soon rightly restored and set. It is quite obvious, that, mere patchwork will not set this state of things right. Dr. Zakir Hussain rightly observes: "It seems clear to me that we have to do some hard conscientious thinking about our education and require a great deal of courage and tenacity to go along the way that thinking prescribes".⁶³

He is unwavering in his implicit faith that 'if many of Basic Schools are even now considerably better places of education than other schools, it is because their relationship with the surrounding life is less remote and they tend to be organized as small educational communities with some common values. Their practical work, whatever its educational short-comings, is closer to their distinctive mental make-up in that period and so the schools manage to develop some positive qualities'. Dr. Zakir Hussain is not just complacent about the Basic schools, at least a few of these which do justify his expectations; he is rather anxious and rightly so, that 'we should not be satisfied until we have made them real places of education through educative work'. "To do this", he points out, "implies a firm decision and an unmistakable will to follow it up to its perfection. Educational work in this should do its best to be like educative work. I wish in our educational work we had always before us the motto—also a very

63. Zakir Hussain : op. cit., p.111.

appropriate motto for a school of work—Thinking and Doing, Doing and Thinking”.⁶⁴

The great educationist is frank enough to admit that the progress of Basic Education has been slow, and uneven and educationally in-effective. In a mood of outspokenness, characterised by candidness, he observes : ⁶⁵

“If the view prevails that this type of school is nothing for us, if the scheme is not sound or not feasible, by all means declare so and be done with it. That would be a more honest course to take it. And I am sure if that is done, the School of Work will return to Indian education with enhanced vigour and be implemented more whole-heartedly and more thoroughly, and that perhaps soon. The greater danger to the School is the acceptance of the idea with a hundred mental reservations and of discrediting it by a thoughtless, inefficient practice”.

Dr. Zakir Hussain is realistic when he says : “There is much that needs to be done in Indian education. But first things must come first”.⁶⁶ He does not subscribe to the arbitrary division or dichotomy between work and cultural activity. “Working at making a good table” he says, “or weaving serviceable cloth, trying to play the sitar well, solving a problem in mathematics, grappling with a moral choice and singing a song, are all cultural activities to me and all can, within their respective limits, be educative. I certainly do not fight shy of the introduction of art and music in school; I indeed welcome it. Others need not be alarmed at the introduction in schools of useful productive work, carefully planned, conscientiously executed, freely criticised and generously appreciated”.⁶⁷ To the question ‘should there be a place for arts, music, singing, dancing and other forms of cultural activities in the lower stages? and if so,

64. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 88.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 88—82.

66. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 90.

67. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 100.

how should they be introduced?" his reply is in the affirmative. He explains it in detail as follows :⁶⁸

"Of course, there should be a place for art and music and song and dance in the school. My whole thesis about the nature of the educational process lends support to this. For these activities are some of the important cultural goods which can contribute to the cultivation of the individual mind. Children should be exposed to these elements of culture. I would only plead that these elements should, in the earlier stages, be taken principally from Indian life. If, as I maintain, the mind can be truly educated only by cultural goods adequate to its own structure it is evident that the cultural goods of the people to whom one belongs must be the most effective instruments of its cultivation".

It is evident, that, while Dr. Zakir Hussain emphasizes the important role of cultural activities in education, he is particular that the "axiom of congruence and correspondence between the mind to be educated and the goods of culture used for its education should never be lost of". He strongly maintains that education 'is in individually organized sense of commitment to such values, awakened by the cultural goods of society. This commitment expresses itself in social action'.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER :

In the bi-polar teaching—learning process, what role does he assign to the teacher? He entrusts the teachers with immense responsibilities, they—'as free moral personalities, ought to be concerned about the moral improvement of the society for which they work, that they are custodians of the highest values created and cherished by our people—themselves representing a fascinating composition of most of what is best in the cultures of mankind'. He is quite convinced that, 'if some of them have never experienced the blissful pain of having been stirred to the depths of their

68. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 105.

being by some of these values, their place, indeed, is not among the ranks of teachers. He, who has never been so stirred, he who has never experienced any of the higher values to the degree of being almost possessed by them at least momentarily, he who has been cold and holds out the depressing prospect of remaining cold with reference to any values beyond his poor little physical self, should really not think of becoming or remaining a teacher'.

What are the functions of a good teacher, in his opinion ? For, he observes with a keen sense of realism :⁶⁹

"A teacher has to help in the transmitting of higher values to his pupils, through his personality and through the goods of culture which are his instruments. If he himself does not know them, has not experienced them, has never one heard their persistent call for realization, how can he transmit or enkindle them? A good teacher has besides this to be a character of the social type The essence of his work is the attempt to get values realized in other young persons as a result of sympathy for and understanding of the needs and gifts of these persons".

As is well-known, the teacher, has to deal with immature growing lives, with personality, as it were, in the bud. The growing individual requires to be guided in the influence he brings to bear on him, by the characteristics of his ward. The function of a good teacher, says Dr. Zakir Hussain, is to "Help the bud into full bloom and not to make paper flowers to satisfy his whim. The growth of the morally autonomous personality is the aim and end of his endeavour. He may never use the culture goods as impositions to make a slavish copy, a cliché".

As regards the functions of a true teacher, Dr. Zakir Hussain pertinently points out further :⁷⁰

"The true teacher yearns to lead his pupils on to the inner moral freedom which should enable them to work for the moral improvement of the ever incom-

69. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 93.

70. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., p. 94.

lete society to which they and he belong, and to work for this end—which a good democratic society should always concede—even when he has to do so at the risk of being stoned to death by that society for performing this inescapable moral duty. Socrates and Christ and Hussain and Gandhi should not have lived and died in vain for him. The teacher is not to dictate or dominate ; his is to help and serve, to understand and shape in Faith and Love and Reverence. It calls forth all his limitless love and his in-exhaustible patience to produce the proper adjustment between the individual and the group While others dogmatize, the teacher knows. He knows that the individual is not just a unit of calculation, an identity card or a number. If the young he has to help grow through work and knowledge and experience are not asking for a fuller and more satisfying life, each in his or her own specific way, then life itself might, perhaps, be a fiction”.

Last, but not least, he feels, that the teacher, given the chance, ‘should help men to grow who will walk together with joy and work together with unflagging zeal for ends beyond themselves’. How many of the teachers would act up to the appeal of the distinguished educationist of the country, when he observes in a characteristic vein :⁷¹

“Fellow-teachers !, I do sincerely feel, I belong to the fraternity. The sense of having served it and of identity with that I believe, is its mission, gives me the strength to carry on yet awhile.. . . . It is a tremendous challenge we have to face. Let us face it bravely. Let us not always wait till others think out things for us and we set out mechanically soullessly, to execute them. Let us evolve a healthy professional opinion, a high professional sense of national duty. We are not just wage-earners... . . . we have to breathe the spirit of the intellect, of objective morality and social responsibility into the work

71. Zakir Hussain: op. cit., pp. 95—96.

of the hand and to give to intellectual work a firm foundation of concrete, purposeful activity”.

Rightly does he sense the cause of inefficiency of our educational institutions as lying in ‘the very rapid expansion of educational facilities at all levels in recent years without the necessary preparation to make that expansion effective’. This, he says, has led to the ‘indifferent recruitment of large bodies of half-baked under-paid teachers to look after a growing army of young pupils in a world of changing standards in ill-equipped schools and colleges’. Will things be set right ?

Dr. Zakir Hussain’s powerful appeal to the fellow-citizens in his Patel Memorial Lecture will serve a lasting purpose for Educational India of the future. To quote his own memorable words : ⁷²

“This school does not exist in a vacuum. It is an integral and sensitive part of society. The school looks for example in the life of the society around and takes after it. I, therefore, ask for a spirit of general helpfulness and co-operation amongst you in all the enterprises of life such as will make the school community ashamed to betray a lack of co-operative feeling. I ask for a spirit of mutual tolerance amongst you, so that youth of the future will feel that in making room for its growth in expression and asserting itself in its own way, it is not asking for a privilege which the grown up and effective members of society habitually deny to each other. Expression of individuality in social objectives, which is nothing but the provision for each to serve society in an effective manner, should not be a privilege that is extorted from reluctant hands, but a right that is freely given to and joyfully accepted The reconstruction of our educational work and the moral regeneration of the people are inextricably interlinked. Let us set our hand courageously to both”.

72. Zakir Hussain: *op. cit.*, pp. 96—98.

CHAPTER XXVII

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH

That universal education is a 'must' is conceded by everybody—that it answers to a present and imperative need of the intellectual and vital effort of the race, but 'what education is or practically or ideally should be' is something on which all are not agreed. Sri Aurobindo addresses himself to this stupendous task in his own magnificent way. To Aurobindo 'all that appears to be almost unanimously agreed on is that the teaching given into the existing schools and universities has been bad in kind and in addition denationalizing, degrading and impoverishing to the national mind, soul and character'. To what extent education as imparted at present, in free India is till typical of this kind, is a matter on which all educationists may have differing opinions because, since our Independence, it is not overshadowed by those absolute characteristics as were dominant in pre-independent days, it is no longer true to-day, that education is 'overshadowed by a foreign hand and foreign aim, method, substance and spirit'. It is too well-known to everyone that changes have been introduced in the educational system of the country after obtaining freedom from foreign domination, though of course, the change may not be revolutionary in the sense that qualitative excellence has not yet been achieved.

It may be remembered, that Shri Aurobindo was in his very early years subjected to the accidental influence—having been brought up in the English Public School and later, in the University at England and it was only on his return to India after completion of his Higher Studies, 'did he begin the true study of Oriental languages and philosophy and other

1. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, 1960, Second Impression, p. 4.

related fields. Therefore, he was originally a product, fully immersed in the Western classics in which he distinguished himself as a scholar of great repute but his return to India and permanent stay in the mother country after a long period of stay in the West, transformed him into a completely different being. Perhaps, he turned more to the East for his yogic inspiration and transformation, but at the same time accepting whatever was intrinsically true and great in the West. In his educational philosophy, one finds such a synthesis or an integration of whatever is good in both the East and the West, though of course, he leans more on the East than on the West. Posing the problem of education that is best fitted and suited to the country, he says :²

"I presume that it is something more, profound, great and searching that we have in mind and that, whatever the difficulty of giving it shape, it is an education proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture that we are in quest of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past, but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming self-creation, to her eternal spirit. It is this that we have to get clear in our minds and for that, we must penetrate down to fundamentals and make those firm before we can greatly execute. Otherwise nothing is easier than to start off on a false but specious cry or, from an unsound starting-point and travel far away from the right path on a tangent that will lead us to no goal but only to emptiness and failure".

Even to-day in the country, attempts are being made to bring in an element of nationalism in her education, apart from internationalism.³ But how far the institutions that go by the new name—by the mere virtue of an epithet or tagging on the word "national" to a school or college or even a Council or Board of Education or as Sri Aurobindo says, "to put that into the hands of an indigenous agency mostly of men trained in the very system we are denouncing, to reproduce that condemned system with certain differences,

2. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 5.

additions, subtractions, modifications of detail and curriculum, to tack on a technical side and think we have solved the problem does not really change anything".³

Sri Aurobindo plunged himself into the vortex of the nationalist movement in those days, after serving a few years at Baroda and took a very keen part in politics before taking to yoga—to which he dedicated himself all his life. He was a staunch fighter for national liberation and stood in the forefront. But yet, he was not a believer in a false kind of nationalism. This was probably what he had in mind when he remarks :⁴

"To be satisfied with a trick of this kind is to perform a somersault round our centre of intellectual gravity, land ourselves where we were before and think we have got into quite another country,—obviously a very unsatisfactory proceeding. The institutions that go by the new name may or may not be giving a better education than the others, but in what they are more national, is not altogether clear even to the most willingly sympathetic critical intelligence".

He admits that the magnitude of the problem of education is 'such a one of surpassing difficulty as is not easy to discover from what point of thought or of practice one has to begin, on what principle to create or on what lines to map out the new building'. He also admits that the conditions are intricate and the thing that is to be created must be in an entirely new way. When Aurobindo is thinking of chartering or mapping out a programme of education, he does not favour a mere 'revision' or a 'resuscitation' of some past principle,—a method and system that was in vogue in India, at one time, however great it was or in consonance with our past civilisation and culture. To Sri Aurobindo, such a reversion of the past principle would be a 'sterile and impossible effort, hopelessly inadequate to the pressing demands of the present, and the far greater demands of our future. • Nor does he favour a mere taking over of the Eng-

3. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 4.

4. Sri Aurobindo: *Ibid.*, 4.

lish, German or American school and University or some variation on them with a 'gloss of Indian colour'. Such a kind of patch-work is what is happening to-day in the country in the field of education. Aurobindo thinks of this course as "attractively facile and one that saves the need of thinking and of new experiment.

Aurobindo does not believe in a narrowly conceived national system of education wherein there is an unprofitable intrusion of a false and narrow patriotism into a field in which patriotism, apart from the need of a training in good citizenship has no legitimate place. His disabling objection to such a kind of narrow patriotism in education is based on the fact 'for that one purpose no special kind or form of education is needed, since the training to good citizenship must be in all essentials the same whether in the East or the West, England or Germany or Japan or India'. "Mankind, and its needs", Sri Aurobindo observes, "are the same everywhere and truth and knowledge are one and have no country ; education too must be a thing universal and without nationality or borders. What, for an instance, could be meant by a national system of education in Science, and does it signify that we are to reject modern truth and modern method of science because they come to us from Europe and go back to the imperfect scientific knowledge of classical India, exile Galilioe and Newton and all that came after, and teach only what was known to Bhaskara, Aryabhatta and Varahamihira ?"⁵

We are living at a very critical time in the history of the country ; We are free to do things in our own way and alter them as we like. We have, since Independence given a larger place for the study of the past of our country, replaced English by the indigenous tongues as a medium, and relegated the former to the position of a second language. In this context, how do Aurobindo's views on education come into the picture and give a saving touch ? Sri Aurobindo seems to be quite relevant when he poses the question : Are we then to fetch back to the methods of the "tols"

5. Sri Aurobindo : op. cit., p. 6.

of Nadiya or to the system, if we can find out what it was, practised in ancient Takshashila or Nalanda ? After all we live in the twentieth century and cannot revive the India of Chandragupta or Akbar; we must keep abreast of the march of truth and knowledge, fit ourselves for existence under actual circumstances, and our education must be therefore up-to-date in form and substance and modern in life and spirit.⁶ It is thus quite clear that, Sri Aurobindo does not stand for a mere reversion to the old but is strongly in favour of a system of education which will be thoroughly modern and up-to-date.

According to Aurobindo the thinker, his objectives against the travesty of the idea of a narrowly conceived national education are those which would make of it a 'means of an obscurantist retrogression to the past forms that were once a living frame of our culture but are now dead or dying things'. This is not Aurobindo's idea nor his endeavour. What he voices forth is that "the living spirit of the demand for national education no more requires a return to the astronomy and mathematics of Bhaskara or the forms of the system of Nalanda than the living spirit of Swadeshi a return from railway and motor traction to the ancient chariot and the bullock cart".⁷ What he disapproves is the prevalence or retrogressive sentimentalism about the issue—of education, and the queer violences on common sense and reason and the disconcerting freaks of fantasy which not only prejudice the real issue but also give a false hue to the matter.

The greatness of Aurobindo's thinking and his striking contribution to educational philosophy lies in his upholding of the basic but commonly forgotten principle that 'it is the spirit, the living and vital issue that we have to do with, and there the question is not between modernism and antiquity, but between an imported civilisation and the greater possibilities of the Indian mind and nature, not between the present and the past, but between the present and the future'. He has the greatness of a visionary in him when

6. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 6.

7. Sri Aurobindo: op. cse., pp. 6—7.

he suggests that "it is not a return to the fifth century but an initiation of the centuries to come, not a reversion but a break forward away from a present artificial falsity to her own greater innate potentialities that is demanded by the soul, by the Shakti of India".⁸

What is Aurobindo's concept of 'education' ? He is not one who believes that the acquiring this or that kind of information is the whole or the central matter of education. "But the acquiring of various kinds of information", he points out, "is only one and not the chief of the means and necessities of education : its central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and spirit, it is the formation or, as I would prefer to view it, the evoking of knowledge, character, culture,—that at least if no more. And this distinction makes an enormous difference".⁹ Sri Aurobindo's chief concern is not merely with acquisition of the information put at our disposal by science of the West, 'in an undigested whole or in carefully packed morsels' but to him, the major question is 'not merely what science we learn, but what we shall do with our science and how too, acquiring the scientific mind and recovering the habit of scientific discovery we shall relate it to other powers of the human mind and scientific knowledge to other knowledge more intimate to other and not less light-giving and power-giving parts of our intelligence and nature'.¹⁰

While elaborating his ideas about a truly national education—free from narrow patriotism and bigotry, he brings in cultural elements of a supreme importance borne out by the peculiar cast of the Indian mind, its psychological tradition, its ancestral capacity, turn and knowledge. In a scheme of studies which he prescribes, not elaborately mentioned here, he would include : "A language, Sanskrit or another, should be acquired by whatever method is most natural, efficient and stimulating to the mind and we need not cling there to any past or present manner of teaching ;

8. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

9. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 7.

10. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 8.

but the vital question is how we are to learn and make use of Sanskrit and the indigenous languages so as to get to the heart and intimate sense of our own culture and establish a vivid continuity between the still living power of our past and the yet uncreated power of our future, and how we are to learn and use English or any other foreign tongue so as to know helpfully the life, ideas, and culture of other countries and establish our right relations with the world around us".¹¹ "This is the aim and principle of a true national education", says Aurobindo, "not certainly to ignore modern truth and knowledge, but to take our foundation on our own being, our own mind, our own spirit".¹²

Aurobindo poses another question in this connection : Is European civilisation the thing that we have to acquire and fit ourselves for, and so only can we live and prosper and is it this that our education must do for us ? To him, the idea of national education challenges the sufficiency of this assumption. According to Aurobindo, the purely scientific, rationalistic, industrial, pseudo-democratic civilisation of the West is not complete in itself. It is rather in process of dissolution and it would be a lunatic absurdity for us at this moment to build blindly on that sinking foundation'. With all his appreciation for the scientific method of the West, he does not incline himself to a complete trust in the 'dissolving and moribund past of Europe'. It seems as though what he says is rather in a prophetic vein when he remarks that it would be strange if we could think of nothing better than to cast away our own self and potentialities', especially at a time (according to Aurobindo) 'when the most advanced minds of the Occident are beginning to turn in this red evening of the West for the hope of a new and more spiritual civilisation to the genius of Asia'.

Again, Sri Aurobindo stoutly objects to the 'implicit idea that the mind of man is the same everywhere and can everywhere be passed thorough the same machine and uniformly constructed to order',—an old and effete superstition of the

11. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 8

12. *Ibid.*

reason. Sri Aurobindo's conception comprehends or inheres "the universal mind and soul of humanity", the 'mind and soul of the individual with its infinite variation, its commonness and its uniqueness', and between them there stands an intermediate power the 'mind of a nation, the soul of a people'—the universal mind, the individual mind and the national mind. Education, to be true, according to Aurobindo, must take account of all the three afore-mentioned aspects 'if it is to be, not a machine-made fabric, but a true building or a living evocation of the powers of the mind and spirit of the human-being,'—a concept of true and living education.

What does the true national spirit, temperament, idea and need demand of us and how to apply it in its right harmony to all the different elements of the problem? Sri Aurobindo is addressing himself wholeheartedly to the stupendous but magnificent task of 'creative upbringing of the Indian manhood of the future' which can be fulfilled only by replacing the 'present false empty and mechanical education by something better than a poor and futile chaos or a new mechanical falsity. "It follows that that alone would be a true and living education", says Aurobindo, "which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, as separate and yet inseparable member."¹³ Aurobindo's conception of education is integral in the sense that it comprehends this large and entire principle of co-ordinating the universal, the individual and national souls and minds in a synthetic form. To put it in his own words :¹⁴

"Most is this largeness of view and foundation needed here and now in India, the whole energy of whose

13. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 11.

14. *Ibid.*

life purpose must be at this critical turning of her destinies directed to her one great need, to find and rebuild her true self in individual and in people and to take again, thus repossessed of her inner greatness, her due and natural portion and station in the life of the human race."

Aurobindo is firm in his view that, "India has always had her own peculiar conception and vision of things and we must see whether it is not really, as it is likely to be, that which will be or ought to be at the very root of our education and the one thing that will give it its truly national character."¹⁵ Aurobindo interprets India's peculiar conception and vision of certain things as follows:¹⁶

"Man has not been seen by the thought of India as a living body developed by physical Nature which has evolved certain vital propensities, an ego, a mind and a reason, an animal of the genus and in our case of the species *homo indicus*, whose whole life and education must be turned towards a satisfaction of these propensities under the Government of a trained mind and reason and for the best advantage of the personal and the national ego. It has not been either the turn of her mind to regard man pre-eminently as a reasoning animal, or let us say, widening the familiar definition, a thinking, feeling and willing natural existence, a mental son of physical Nature, and his education as a culture of the mental capacities, or to define him as a political, social and economic being and his education as a training that will fit him to be an efficient productive and well-disciplined member of the society and the State."

Aurobindo does admit that all the above mentioned qualities are no doubt aspects of the human-being, and India has given them a considerable prominence subject to her larger vision, but he thinks that 'they are outward things, parts of the instrumentation of his mind, life and action,

15. *Ibid.*

16. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., pp. 11—12.

not the whole of the real man'. He is inclined to the view that "India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the Universal self and spirit And similarly India has not understood by the nation or people any organised State or an armed and efficient community well prepared for the struggle of life and putting all at the service of the national ego, And equally then our cultural conception of humanity must be in accordance with her ancient vision of the universal manifesting in the human race, evolving through life and mind but with a high ultimate spiritual aim, it must be the idea of the spirit, the soul of humanity advancing through struggle and concert towards oneness, increasing its experience and maintaining a needed diversity through the varied culture and life motives of its many peoples, searching for perfection through the development of the powers of the individual and his progress towards a diviner being and life, but feeling out too, though more slowly, after a similar perfectability in the life of the race."¹⁷

Having given an account of the peculiar conception and vision of India, he observes that "then it should be clear that the only true education will be that which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation. That is the principle on which we must build, the central motive and the guiding ideal. It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity".¹⁸ It is clear that Aurobindo's concept of education is dynamic and synthetic in the sense that he takes into account the mind and soul of the three principal aspects, viz., the universal, the individual and the national minds and souls. His aim is universal transformation through education, hav-

17. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., pp. 12—13.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

ing the individual as an instrument, who forms a part of the nation. "At no time," says Aurobindo, "will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being".¹⁹

A TRUE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION:

Sri Aurobindo considers the current educational system of Europe, no doubt as a great advance on many of the methods of antiquity, with all its palpable defects albeit the fact that it is based on an 'insufficient knowledge of human psychology and it is only safe-guarded in Europe from disastrous results by the refusal of the ordinary student to subject himself to the processes it involves, his habit of studying only so much as he must to avoid punishment to pass an immediate test, his resort to active habits and vigorous physical exercise'. To him, the equally disastrous effects of the European education system on the Indian body, mind and character are only too apparent. Therefore, being cognizant of the then prevalent evils, which even to-day persist, though not in entirety, he conceives of a truly national system of education for the country as that which will be 'as comprehensive as the European and more thorough, without the evils of strain and cramming'. "This can only be done" he points out, "by studying the instruments of knowledge and finding a system of teaching which shall be natural, easy and effective."²⁰ "It is only by strengthening and sharpening these instruments to their utmost capacity," he goes on explaining, "that they can be made effective for the increased work which modern conditions require."²¹ The secret of his observation is that the 'muscles of the mind must be thoroughly trained by simple and easy means ; then, and not till then, great feats of intellectual strength can be required of them.' It is Aurobindo's conviction, to which any educationist would concede that 'any system of education founded on theories of academic perfection which ignores the instrument of study, is more likely to hamper and impair

19. *Ibid.*

20. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 15.

21. *Ibid.*

intellectual growth than to produce a perfect and perfectly equipped mind'. The simple but basic and axiomatic truth is that any educationist has to do, not with dead material but with an infinitely subtle and sensitive organism—for the educationist has to work in the elusive substance of mind and respect also the human limitations.

What shall be the ideal in a system of national education ? Sri Aurobindo makes it clear as follows :²²

“But whether distinct teaching in any form of religion is imparted or not, the essence of religion, to live for others and for oneself in these, must be made the ideal in every school which calls itself national. It is this spirit of Hinduism pervading our schools—which—far more than the teaching of Indian subjects, the use of Indian methods of formal instruction in Hindu beliefs and Hindu scriptures—should be the essence of Nationalism in our schools distinguishing them from all others.”

Thus, Aurobindo clears the befogged or misty atmosphere in our thinking and conception of a chimerical nationalism in education, and prepares us for a bolder, but straight path.

SOUND PRINCIPLES OF TRUE TEACHING :

Aurobindo enunciates certain sound principles of good teaching which though not entirely germane to the educationists have not been kept in mind when actually engaged in the process of teaching. According to Aurobindo, the first principle of true teaching is that ‘nothing can be taught’. By this, he does not mean, he dispenses with teaching altogether, as though it is unnecessary in the educational process. Not that. “The teacher”, he says, “is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps him and encourages him in the process. He does not impart know-

22. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 25.

ledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface.”²³ Knowledgeable people know that these principles, as applied actually to the role of a teacher in ‘education’ as ‘a philosopher, friend and guide’, are in operation to a large extent at the post-graduate level of studies in Colleges and Universities and it is too well known that less importance is attached to this aspect of the role of a teacher, at the under-Graduate level. This is the point where we go wrong, says Aurobindo. He is not able to understand why at still lower levels, the same principle should not operate,—the role of a teacher as a helper and a guide and not an instructor or task-master, as is very often the case. “The distinction that reserves this principle for the teaching of adolescent and adult minds and denies its application to the child,” pertinently observes Aurobindo, “is a conservative and unintelligent doctrine.”²⁴ “Child or man, boy or girl,” continues Aurobindo, “there is only one sound principle of good teaching. Difference of age only serves to diminish or increase the amount of help and guidance necessary ; it does not change its nature.”²⁵

The second principle of true teaching, according to Sri Aurobindo, which is also very often ignored is that ‘the mind has to be consulted in its growth’. Though all knowledge may not be pleasurable in its process of acquisition, yet, the wilful co-operation of the willing educand is a very important thing in the teaching-learning process. Sri Aurobindo has more faith in the Swabhava of the educand, i.e., it is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature. • Rightly does Aurobindo point out :²⁶

“The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and

23. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 15.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit. pp.15—16.

ignorant superstition. . . . There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange beforehand that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a pre-arranged career. To force the nature to abandon its own *dharma* is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deface its perfection. It is a selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation, which loses the benefit of the best that a man could have given it and is forced to accept instead something imperfect and artificial, second-rate, perfunctory and common."

Sri Aurobindo's chief aim of education is that it should help each and every soul to draw out its best. He believes very firmly that every one has his own individuality and potentiality, with a chance of perfection and strength, however imperfect. What he actually aims at in education becomes obvious in his succinct observation :²⁷

"Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use."

The third principle of education, in the view of Aurobindo, the great educationist is 'to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be'. Generally the psychological principles of 'proceeding from the known to the unknown, from the 'familiar to the unfamiliar', from the 'concrete to the abstract' from the near to the far' are all well-known to students of pedagogy. The principle of contiguous learning only explains a part of these, namely that whatever is near is well-known than that which is far removed. But in Aurobindo, we find him going deeper into this aspect, as when he says :²⁸

²⁷. Op. cit., p. 16.

²⁸. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit. p. 16.

“The basis of a man’s nature is almost always, in addition to his soul’s past, his heredity, his surroundings, his nationality, his country, the soil from which he draws sustenance, the air which he breathes, the sights, sounds, habits to which he is accustomed. They mould him not the less powerfully because insensibly, and from that then we must begin.”

What are the conditions, which Aurobindo thinks are important for a free and natural growth, if genuine development is to take place? In this connection, a few of his observations may be noted which run as follows:²⁹

“We must not take up the nature by the roots from the earth in which it must grow or surround the mind with images and ideas of a life which is alien to that in which it must physically move: If anything has to be brought in from outside, it must be offered, not forced on the mind. A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development.”

What kind of education does Sri Aurobindo, the great seer visualise for India? He says :³⁰

“There are souls which naturally revolt from their surroundings and seem to belong to another age and clime. Let them be free to follow their bent; but the majority languish, become empty, become artificial, if artificially moulded into an alien form. It is God’s arrangement that they should belong to a particular nation, age society, that they should be children of the past, possessors of the present, creators of the future. The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit. Each must have its due and natural place in a national system of education ”.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

30. *Ibid.*

PHYSICAL CULTURE :

Sri Aurobindo aims at perfection in all aspects of culture,—be it spiritual, psychic, mental and vital or physical culture. He has implicit faith in the old Sanskrit adage ‘Sariram Khalu dharma—sadhanam’,—body is the means of fulfilment of dharma, and dharma means every ideal which we propose to ourselves and the law of its working out and its action. “If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being”, says Aurobindo, “the physical part of it cannot be left aside, for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use”.³¹ “The perfection of the body, as great a perfection as we can bring about by means at our disposal”, observes Aurobindo, “must be the ultimate aim of physical culture”.³² While his ultimate aim is total perfection, he stresses that ‘our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation, unless its action and functioning attain to a supreme capacity and the perfection which is possible to it or which can be made possible’.

“A divine life in a material world”, says Aurobindo, “implies necessarily a union of the two ends of existence, the spiritual summit and the material base.”³³ He attaches great importance to physical aspects of culture—a relative perfection of the physical consciousness in the body as a desirable outcome of the exercises and practices of the physical culture. “A development of the physical consciousness must always be a considerable part of our aim”, explains Aurobindo, “but for that the right development of the body itself is an essential element ; health, strength, fitness are the first needs, but the physical frame itself must be the best possible.”³⁴ In his yogic perfection—integral and synthetic yoga, the physical perfection forms an

31. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 43.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Sri Aurobindo: op. cit., p. 44.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

important part or element of the various processes. To him what is more important than anything else is, what he himself describes as a 'trained and developed automatism, a perfected skill and capacity of eye and ear and the hands and all the members prompt to respond to any call made on them, a developed spontaneous operation as an instrument, a complete fitness for any demand that the mind and life-energy can make upon it'. This is ordinarily the best we can achieve at the lower end, he says and the rest, he points out, we have to turn to the mind and life-energy themselves or to the energy of the spirit and to what they can do for a greater perfection of the body.

The passage that is quoted below gives an idea of the physical basis of Aurobindo's philosophy: ³⁵

"The soul with the basis of its life established in Matter ascends to the heights of the Spirit but does not cast away its base, it joins the heights and the depths together. The Spirit descends into Matter and the material world with all its lights and glories and powers and with them fills and transforms life in the material world so that it becomes more and more divine. The transformation is not a change into something purely subtle and spiritual to which Matter is in its nature repugnant and by which it is felt as an obstacle or as a shackle binding the Spirit; it takes up the Matter as a form of the Spirit though now a form which conceals and turns it into a revealing instrument, it does not cast away the energies of Matter, its capacities, its methods; it brings out their hidden possibilities, uplifts, sublimates, discloses their innate divinity."

When Aurobindo is conceiving of a supreme perfection, "a total perfection", he says, "is possible only by a transformation of our lower or human nature, a transformation of the mind into a thing of light, our life into a thing of power, an instrument of right action, right use for all its forces, of a happy elevation of its being, lifting it beyond its present

comparatively narrow potentiality for a self-fulfilling force of action and joy of life. There must be equally a transforming change of the body by a conversion of its action, its functioning, its capacities as an instrument beyond the limitations by which it is clogged and hampered even in its greatest present human attainment.”³⁶ Aurobindo’s greatness consists in not ignoring the physical aspects of culture as was done in the past in our educational system—not as something to be overcome but in stressing that physical fitness as an instrument of spiritual perfection and a field of the spiritual change. When he thinks of the perfection of the body, he means it as an instrument for taking up the activities of human life and sublimating them by the power of the Spirit.

Sri Aurobindo has shown us the right path in this direction by himself establishing a school for the education of the children of the resident sadhaks of his Ashram at Pondicherry, South India, where intensive physical training forms even to-day an important part of their development, giving form to the sports and athletics. When some people questioned Aurobindo as to ‘what place sports can have in an Ashram created for spiritual seekers’ and ‘what connection there can be between spirituality and sports’, his answer was that the utility of such a training can have much to do for the life of a nation and its benefits for the international life. His further explanation was that it would prepare for a total perfection, inclusive of the perfection of the body. The object of such an activity,—sports and physical exercises, must be, he says, “the training of the body and the development of certain parts of mind and character as far as this” can be done by or in connection with this training”. To him, all these would belong only to the lower end of the being—a relative and human perfection that can be attained within certain limits ; and anything greater can be reached only by the intervention of higher powers, psychic powers, the powers of the spirit.

36. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: op. cit., p. 45.

What is his ultimate aim of physical perfection ? How he explains it, is as follows :³⁷

“In the use of such activities as sports and physical exercises for the education of the individual in childhood and first youth which should mean the bringing out of his actual and latent possibilities to their fullest development, the means and methods we must use are limited by the nature of the body and its aim must be such relative human perfection of the body’s powers and capacities and those of the powers of mind, will, character, action of which it is at once the residence and the instrument as far as these methods can help to develop them”.

What he admires most and would like to be trained are qualities such as : dexterity,—and stability in all kinds of physical action—swiftness in the race, dexterity in compact, skill and endurance of the mountaineer, the constant and often extraordinary response to all that can be demanded from the body of the soldier, sailor, traveller or explorer, etc., adventure of all kinds and all the wide range of physical attainment to which man has accustomed himself or to which he is exceptionally pushed by his own will or by the compulsion of circumstance. What he aims at is a ‘general fitness of the body for all that can be asked from it which is the common formula of all this action, a fitness attained by a few or by many, that could be generalised by an extended and many-sided physical education and discipline.’ He elaborates his scheme of physical education as follows :³⁸

“Some of these activities can be included under the name of sports, there are others for which sport and physical exercises can be an effective preparation. In some of them, a training for common action, combined movement, discipline are needed and for that our physical exercises can make one ready, in others a developed individual will, skill of mind and quick perception, forcefulness of life,—energy and

37. Sri Aurobindo-et. al. — : op. cit. p. 50.

38. Sri Aurobindo et. al: op. cit. p. 51.

subtle physical impulsions are more pre-eminently needed and may even be the one sufficient trainer. All must be included in our conception of the natural powers of the body and its capacity and instrumental fitness in the service of the human mind and will and therefore in our concept of the total perfection of the body."

Aurobindo's philosophy of education is based on the principle of evocation of potentialities of the individual in all its entirety and full development as many-sided as possible. His deeper convictions rest on the premise that "in all forms in the world there is a force at work, unconsciously active or oppressed by inertia in its lower formulations, but in the human-being conscious from the first, with its potentialities partly awake, partly asleep or latent: what is awake in it, we have to make fully conscious ; what is asleep, we have to arouse and set to its work ; what is latent, we have to evoke and educate." According to him, in all effective and expressive activities of the material world, the fullest co-operation of the two ends of our being is absolutely necessary. "If the body is unable whether by fatigue or by natural incapacity or any other cause to second the thought or will or is in any way irresponsive or insufficiently responsive", he says, "to that extent the action fails or falls short or becomes in some degree unsatisfying or incomplete. In what seems to be an exploit of the spirit so purely mental as the outpouring of poetic inspiration, there must be a responsive vibration of the brain and its openness as a channel for the power of the thought and the vision and the light of the word that is making or breaking its way through or seeking for its perfect expression."³⁹ It is his considered opinion that 'if the brain is fatigued or dulled by any clog, either the inspiration cannot come and nothing is written or it fails and something inferior is all that can come out.....' Therefore, he holds the view that 'even in the most purely mental activities the fitness, readiness or perfect training of the bodily instrument

is a condition indispensable. That readiness, that response too is part of the total perfection of the body'.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION:

What place have religious and moral teaching in Aurobindo's scheme of education ? The education of the intellect, he says, divorced from the perfection of the moral and emotional nature, is injurious to human progress. He admits the difficulties involved in providing a suitable moral training for the school and college. He distinguishes the heart from the mind, and says that to instruct the mind is not to instruct the heart. He senses the danger of moral text-books being used for the purpose, in that 'they make the thinking of high things mechanical and artificial, and whatever is mechanical and artificial is inoperative for good'. Further, he points out pertinently that 'the attempt to make boys moral and religious by the teaching of moral and religious text-books is a vanity and a delusion, precisely because the heart is not the mind and to instruct the mind does not necessarily improve the heart'.

The best kind of moral training that Sri Aurobindo conceives of is, 'to habituate himself to right emotions, the noblest associations, the best mental, emotional and physical habits and the following out in right action of the fundamental impulses of his essential nature'. By way of moral and religious education, what is done in the West, he points out, is imposition of a certain discipline on children, dressing them into a certain mould, lashing them into a desired path. What he feels about such a kind of training is that 'unless you can get their hearts and natures on your side, the conformity to this imposed rule becomes a hypocritical and heartless, a conventional, often cowardly compliance'. While adverting to the European example, he points out :⁴⁰

"This is what is done in Europe, and it leads to that remarkable phenomenon known as the sowing of wild oats as soon as the yoke of discipline at school

40. Sri Aurobindo et. al.: op. cit., p. 22.

and at home is removed, and to the social hypocrisy, which is so large a feature of European life. Only what the man admires and accepts becomes a part of himself ; the rest is a mask. On the other hand, to neglect moral and religious education altogether is to corrupt the race."

Sri Aurobindo deprecates the purely mental instruction as was given under the English system since it does not influence the moral nature—the heart. He considers three things as of the utmost importance in dealing with a man's moral nature, viz., the emotions, the *Samskaras* or formed habits and associations, and the *sva-bhava* or nature. He appreciates certain good things in the English educational system and particularly to mention—the English Boarding School, where the excellent element is, he points out "that the master at his best stands there as a moral guide and example, leaving the boys largely to influence and help each other in following the path silently shown to them".⁴¹ But at the same time, he is not blind to the little good that is done being far outweighed by much evil. "The method practised," in the English Boarding School, he says, "is crude and marred by the excess of outer discipline for which the pupils have no respect except that of fear and the exiguity of the inner assistance".⁴² What the European system usually makes of the pedagogue, he says, is the 'hired instructor or the benevolent policeman'. In this connection, he commends the 'old Indian system of the *Guru* commanding by his knowledge and sanctity the implicit obedience, perfect admiration, reverent emulation of the student' as a far superior method of moral discipline. Though he is not unaware of the fact that it is impossible to restore that 'ancient system', but yet he holds on to the view that it is not impossible to substitute the wise friend, guide and helper in the place.

AUROBINDO'S GUIDE-LINES FOR MORAL TRAINING :

In moral training, Sri Aurobindo stresses the value of suggestion and deprecates imposition. "The first rule of

41. Sri Aurobindo: et. al.: op. cit., p. 22.

42. *Ibid.*

moral training," he says, "is to suggest and invite, not command or impose. The best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily converse and the books read from day to day."⁴³ What shall be the content of such books? He is particular that these books for the younger students should contain the "lofty examples of the past given, not as moral lessons, but as things of supreme human interest," and for the elder students, the 'great thoughts of great souls, the passages of literature which set fire to the highest emotions and prompt the highest ideals and aspirations, the records of history and biography which exemplify the living of those great thoughts, noble emotions and inspiring ideals'. It is his feeling that such books if read would form a 'kind of good company, *satsanga*, which can seldom fail to have effect so long as sententious sermonising is avoided, and becomes of the highest effect if the personal life of the teacher is itself moulded by the great things he places before his pupils'. But how many of the teachers in schools and colleges can be expected to be up to the level of Aurobindo's standard? Aurobindo is doubtful whether if the expected good effect will take place in the absence of an opportunity being given, within its limited sphere, of embodying in action the moral impulses which rise within it — the moral temper we desire in the young.

"Every boy should," says Aurobindo, "therefore be given practical opportunity as well as intellectual encouragement to develop all that is best in the nature. If he has bad qualities, bad habits, bad *samskaras*, whether of mind or body, he should not be treated harshly as a delinquent, but encouraged to get rid of them by the Raja-yogic method of *samyama*, rejection and substitution".⁴⁴ Instead of discouraging such people, Aurobindo would like them to be rather encouraged to think of such bad traits, 'not as sins or offences, but as symptoms of a curable disease, alterable by a steady and sustained effort of the will, — falsehood being rejected and replaced by truth, fear by courage, selfishness by sacrifice and renunciation,

43. Sri Aurobindo et. al. op. cit., p. 23.

44. Sri Aurobindo et. al: pp. 23—24.

malice by love'. Sri Aurobindo has immense faith in turning or converting even bad natures into desirable ones through proper guidance, suggestion and encouragement. He goes to the extent of saying that 'the wildness and recklessness of many young natures are only the overflowings of an excessive strength, greatness and nobility. They should be purified, not discouraged'. Thus Aurobindo foresees wonderful possibilities of reforming and transforming the undesirable natures to desirable one. The only thing needed is, that great care will have to be taken to see that 'unformed virtues are not rejected as faults.'

What about religious teaching? Just as in the case of moral education, so also in regard to religious teaching as well, he does not see much effect of it taking place—making people pious and moral. Merely teaching the dogmas of religion, he says, cannot make children pious or moral. This is according to him a strange idea and a European error, and "its practice," he says, "either leads to mechanical acceptance of a creed having no effect on the inner and little on the outer life, or it creates the fanatic, the pietist, the ritualist, or the unctuous hypocrite".⁴⁵ True religion, according to his conception, has to be lived, not learned as a creed. He firmly declares that any 'prohibition is a sop to secularism declared or concealed.' "No religious teaching is of any value", observes Aurobindo, "unless it is lived, and the use of various kinds of *sadhana*, spiritual self-training and exercise is the only effective preparation for religious living. The ritual of prayer, homage, ceremony is craved for by many minds as an essential preparation and, if not made an end in itself is a great help to spiritual progress; if it is withheld, some other form of meditation, devotion or religious duty must be put in its place. Otherwise, religious teaching is of little use and would almost be better ungiven".⁴⁶

THE TRAINING OF THE SENSES :

In the matter of the training of the senses, he aims at

45. Sri Aurobindo et. al.: p. 24.

46. Sri Aurobindo et. al: op. cit. n 24.

nothing less than perfection. This, he says, must be one of the first cares of the teacher.* The two important things that are needed of the senses, he points out, are 'accuracy and sensitiveness'. He wants us to understand what are the obstacles that stand in the way of accuracy and sensitiveness of the senses in order that the best steps may be taken to remove them. He is particular that the root causes of imperfection must be understood by those who desire to bring about perfection.

The senses, as we all know, depend for their accuracy and sensitiveness on the unobstructed activity of the nerves which are the channels of their information and the passive acceptance of the mind, the recipient. Sometimes, the obstruction may be due to the fault in the nerve currents. Since the nerves are nothing but channels of communication, they have no power in themselves to alter the information given by the organs. If the nerve channel is obstructed, the obstruction may interfere with the fulness or the accuracy of the information as it reaches the mind, resulting in an insufficient sensitiveness of the senses. Sri Aurobindo firmly believes in the possibility of removal of such obstructions so long as they are not caused by either physical injury or defect in the organ itself. To him, a possible source of remedy lies in the 'purification of the nerve system'. "The remedy is a simple one", says Aurobindo, "which is now becoming more and more popular in Europe for different reasons and objects, the regulation of the breathing. This process inevitably restores the perfect and unobstructed activity of the channels and, if well and thoroughly done, leads to a high activity of the senses. The process is called in Yogic discipline *nadi—shuddhi* or nerve-purification."⁴⁷

The obstruction in the nerve channel, even if it does not absolutely stop, may distort the information. "And all distortions due to actions in the nervous system can be traced", says Aurobindo to "some kind of emotional disturbance acting in the nerve channels". In such cases, Sri Aurobindo counsels the habit of calm, the habitual steady

47. * Sri Aurobindo et. al.: op. cit. p. 31.

ness of the nerves'. "This also can be brought about," observes Aurobindo, "by *nadi-shuddhi* or nerve purification, which quiets the system, gives a deliberate calmness to all the internal processes and prepares the purification of the mind."⁴⁸

He considers it exceedingly important that thought should work on sufficient and perfect material. "It is, therefore, the first business of the educationist", says Aurobindo, "to develop in the child the right use of the six senses ; to see that they are not stunted or injured by disuse, but trained by the child himself under the teacher's direction to that perfect accuracy and keen subtle sensitiveness of which they are capable. In addition, whatever assistance can be gained by the organs of action, should be thoroughly employed. The hand, for instance, should be trained to reproduce what the eye sees and the mind senses. The speech should be trained to a perfect expression of the knowledge which the whole *antahkarana* possesses."⁴⁹

As is well-known, there are six senses which minister to knowledge, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, mind or *manas* (the sixth sense of our Indian psychology) and all of these except the last is known to look outward and gather the material of thought from outside through the physical nerves and their end-organs—eye, ear, nose, skin, palate. Provided the nerve channels are quiet and clear, the only possible source of disturbance which Aurobindo foresees, as regards communication of the information is from or through the mind, which quite unlike the other senses, is both a sense organ and a channel. As a channel for communication with the *buddhi* or brain force, any disturbance or interference may happen either from above or from below—as a channel it is subject to disturbance resulting either in obstruction, or distortion. As a sense organ it is as automatically perfect as the others.

For the full development of the sensitiveness of the mind, Aurobindo presses into service what is called our

48. *Ibid.*

49. Sri Aurobindo et. al.: op. cit. p. 19.

yogic discipline *sukshmadristi* or subtle reception of images. Regarding this he observes :⁵⁰

“Telepathy, clairvoyance, clair-audience, pre-sentiment, thought-reading, character-reading, and many other modern discoveries are very ancient powers of the mind which have been left undeveloped, and they all belong to the *manas*. The development of the sixth sense has never formed part of human training. In a future age it will undoubtedly take a place in the necessary preliminary training of the human instrument. Meanwhile there is no reason why the mind should not be trained to give a correct report to the intellect so that our thought may start with absolutely correct, if not with full impressions.”

Sri Aurobindo conceives of removing the first obstacle to accuracy and sensitiveness—the ‘nervous-emotional’ by means of the purification of the ‘nervous system, previously referred to as *nadi-shuddhi*. The second obstacle that he foresees is, that of the ‘emotions warping the impressions as it comes’. In his scheme of things, this difficulty can only be removed by the ‘discipline of the emotions, the purifying of the moral habits’. He considers this as a part of moral training. The third obstacle or difficulty he anticipates is, the ‘disturbance of previous associations formed or ingrained in the *citta* or passive memory’. What is the nature of this difficulty? As Aurobindo envisages :⁵¹

“We have a habitual way of looking at things and the conservative inertia in our nature disposes us to give every new experience the shape and semblance of those to which we are accustomed. It is only more developed minds which can receive first impressions without an unconscious bias against the novelty of novel experience. For instance, if we get a true impression of what is happening—and we habitually act on such impressions,

50. Sri Aurobindo et. al.: op. cit., p. 32.

51. Sri Aurobindo et. al.: op. cit. p. 33.

true or false — if it differs from what we are accustomed to expect, the old association meets it in the *citta* and sends a changed report to the intellect in which either the new impression is overlaid and concealed by the old or mingled with it..... To get rid of this obstacle is impossible without *citta shuddhi* or purification of the mental and moral habits formed in the *citta*. Thus is a preliminary process of yoga and was effected in our ancient system by various means, but would be considered out of place in a modern system of education”.

So long as *citta-shuddhi* is not accepted as a principle in education — in the training of the senses, particularly the mind, Aurobindo says, ‘we must be content to allow this source of disturbance to remain’. “A really national system of education” declared Aurobindo, “would not allow itself to be controlled by European ideas in this all-important matter. And there is a process so simple and momentous that it can easily be made a part of our system”⁵² What is that simple and momentous process? Says Aurobindo:⁵³

“It consists in bringing about passivity of the restless flood of thought sensations rising of its own momentum from the passive memory independent of our will and control. This passivity liberates the intellect from the siege of old associations and false impressions. It gives it power to select only what is wanted from the store-house of the passive memory, automatically brings about the habit of getting right impressions and enables the intellect to dictate to the *citta*, what *samskaras* or associations shall be formed or rejected. This is the real office of the intellect,—to discriminate, choose, select, arrange. But so long as there is not *citta-shuddhi*, instead of doing this office perfectly, it itself remains imperfect and corrupt and adds to the confusion in the mind channel by false

52. Sri Aurobindo: et. al.: op. cit., p. 33.

53. Sri Aurobindo: et. al.: op. cit., p. 34.

judgment,—false imagination, false memory, false observation, false comparison, contrast and analogy, false deduction, induction and inference. The purification of the *citta* is essential for the liberation, purification and perfect action of the intellect.”

Sri Aurobindo, while analysing the causes of inefficiency of the senses, as gatherers of knowledge, attributes it to ‘insufficient use’. He points out that more often than not, we are generally, prone not to observe ‘sufficiently or with sufficient attention and closeness and sight, sound smell, even touch or taste knocks in vain at the door for admission.’ This kind of *tamasic* inertia of the receiving instrument, he says, is due to the inattention of the *buddhi*. It is, therefore, his considered opinion, that “the student ought to be accustomed to catch the sights, sounds, etc., around him, distinguish them, mark their nature, properties and sources and fix them in the *citta* so that they may be always ready to respond when called for by the memory.”⁵⁴ From the passage quoted above, it is quite obvious that Aurobindo lays great stress on the faculty of observation, which is generally imperfectly developed in men, merely from want of care in the use of the sense and the memory. “To get rid of this imperfection” says Aurobindo “will go a long way towards the removal of error. It can be done by training the senses to do their work perfectly, which they will do readily enough if they know the *buddhi* requires it of them, and giving sufficient attention to put the facts in their right place and order in the memory.”⁵⁵

He recognises ‘attention’ as a chief factor in knowledge and considers it the first condition of right memory and of accuracy. “To attend to what he is doing”, observes Sri Aurobindo “is the first element of discipline required of the student, this can easily be secured if the object of attention is made interesting’. One starts wondering, how often, teachers make objects of attention interesting! He considers this ‘attention to a single thing’ as concentra-

54. Sri Aurobindo: et. al: op. cit., p. 35.

55. *Ibid.*

tion. But what he does not want us to overlook is, what is called,* that 'concentration on several things at a time', which he says, is often indispensable. This is known in educational psychology as the principle of 'multiple attention' at a time. Aurobindo holds the view that 'it is quite possible to develop the power of double concentration, triple concentration, multiple concentration'. Aurobindo throws further light on this aspect by illustrating as follows:⁵⁶

"When a given incident is happening, it may be made up of several simultaneous happenings or a set of simultaneous circumstances, a sight, a sound, a touch or several sights, sounds, touches occurring at the same moment or in the same short space of time. The tendency of the mind is to fasten on one and mark others vaguely, many not at all or, if compelled to attend to all, to be distracted and mark none perfectly. Yet this can be remedied and the attention equally distributed over a set of circumstances in such a way as to observe and remember each perfectly. It is merely a matter of *abhyasa* or steady natural practice."

According to Aurobindo, "sense-improvement by practice" can be adopted to secure perfection of attention and sensitiveness. In this, he does not ignore the value of the hand in coming to the help of the eye, in dealing with the multitudinous objects of its activity so as to ensure accuracy — 'a use so obvious and imperatively needed', he says. In this connection, he commends 'the practice of imitation by the hand of the thing seen' as of use both in detecting the lapses and inaccuracies of the mind, in noticing the objects of sense and in registering accurately what has been seen.

Says Aurobindo :⁵⁷

"Imitation by the hand ensures accuracy of observation. This is one of the first uses of drawing and it is sufficient in itself to make the teaching of

56. Sri Aurobindo: et. al. op. cit. p. 36.

57. Sri Aurobindo: et. al. op. cit., p. 37.

this subject a necessary part of the training of the organs."

In the course of his 'Evening Talks', once, Sri Aurobindo hinted at the real problem of education and his observation ran as follows :⁵⁸

"To bring out the real man is the first business of education. In the present system it is sorely neglected. It can be done by promoting powers of observation, memory, reasoning, etc. Through these, the man within must be touched and brought out."

Continuing his talk, Sri Aurobindo observes :⁵⁹

"When the real man—the true individual is brought out, then you can place him in contact with the past. At present information is forced into the child's brain. The child can very well gather it by himself if his mind is trained. Perfect liberty would be desirable for the child. I would not like any hard things to be brought into the child's experience. In Japan, it seems, the child is free when it is young and, as it grows and reaches the college, discipline tightens."

Thus, Aurobindo seems to like children being naturally disciplined.

ON TEACHING :

Sri Aurobindo has nothing but contempt for the practice of 'teaching by snippets' which is largely in vogue in the existing system of education. "Teaching by snippets" says Aurobindo "must be relegated to the lumber-room of dead sorrows." What does he mean by such a method? Says Aurobindo :⁶⁰

58. *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo* : • Second Series, Recorded by. A. Purani, published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1st Impression, 1961, p. 138.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education* : • Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, 1961,—p. 26.

“A subject is taught a little at a time, in conjunction with a host of others, with the result that what might be well learnt in a single year is badly learned in seven and the boy goes out ill-equipped, served with imperfect parcels of knowledge, master of none of the great departments of human knowledge.”

He characterises such a system of education as one attempting to ‘heighten this practice of teaching by snippets at the bottom and the middle and suddenly change it to a grandiose specialism at the top. This is to base the triangle on its apex and hope that it will stand’.

He has regard and admiration for the old system of education, particularly in relation to teaching — the old system was to teach one or two subjects well and thoroughly and then proceed to others. Commending this system, observes Aurobindo :⁶¹

“...and certainly it was a more rational system than the modern. If it did not impart so much varied information, it built up a deeper, nobler and much more real culture. Much of the shallowness, discursive lightness and fickle mutability of the average modern mind is due to the vicious principle of teaching by snippets.”

While admiring the ancient system of education which followed the commendable principle of ‘teaching one or two subjects thoroughly and well’, he is not totally blind in his acceptance of the old system. He is not dogmatic in his advocacy of the old principle of teaching, but he is rational. He puts it superbly, when he says :⁶²

“The one defect that can be alleged against the old system was ‘the subject earliest learned might fade from the mind of the student while he was mastering his later studies. But the excellent thing given to the memory by the ancients obviated the incidence of this defect. In the future education we need not bind ourselves either by the ancient,

61. Sri Aurobindo et. al: op. cit., p. 26.

62. *Ibid.*

or the modern system but select only the most perfect and rapid means of mastering knowledge."

What is wrong with the modern system of education? In the modern system of education, children are not able to concentrate. The attention of children is easily tired, and they are not able to stand the strain of long application to a single subject. The frequent change of subject dissipates their attention. This discourages prolonged concentration. Sri Aurobindo contends that a child of seven or eight is capable of a good deal of concentration, if he is interested. Therefore, to him, interest is the basis of concentration. This fact is also borne out by modern psychological investigations. Pointing out the un-psychological aspects of current teaching practice, Sri Aurobindo remarks :⁶³

"We make his lessons supremely uninteresting and repellent to the child, a harsh compulsion, the basis of teaching and then complain of his restless inattention! The substitution of a natural self-education by the child for the present unnatural system will remove this objection of inability. A child, like a man, if he is interested, much prefers to get to the end of its subject rather than leave it unfinished. To lead him on step by step, interesting and absorbing him in each as it comes, until he has mastered his subject is the true art of teaching."

He is particular that 'the first attention of the teacher must be given to the medium and the instruments and, until these are perfected, to multiply subjects of regular instruction is to waste time and energy.'

LANGUAGE-TEACHING :

"When the mental instruments are sufficiently developed to acquire a language easily and swiftly" says Aurobindo "that is the time to introduce him to many languages, not when he can partially understand what he is taught

63. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Education: p. 27.

and masters it laboriously and imperfectly". He believes in the disciplinary value of learning one language, especially one's own language, which he says, prepares one for mastering another. Whereas, on the other hand, he maintains, "with the linguistic faculty unsatisfactorily developed in one's own tongue, to master others is impossible". His observation is quite pertinent when he says :⁶⁴

"To study science with the faculties of observation, judgment, reasoning and comparison only slightly developed is to undertake a useless and thankless labour. So it is with all other subjects."

Thus, Aurobindo aims at perfection in the development of one's faculties in pursuing any subject of study. "The mother-tongue" he says "is the proper medium of education and therefore the first energies of the child should be directed to the thorough mastering of the medium".

He has immense faith in the potentialities of children and this is revealed in his observations quoted below :⁶⁵

"Almost every child has an imagination, and instinct for words, a dramatic faculty, a wealth of idea and fancy.....Every child is a lover of interesting narrative, a hero-worshipper and a patriot.....Every child is an inquirer, an investigator, analyser, a merciless anatomist.....Every child has an insatiable intellectual curiosity and turn for metaphysical enquiry.....Every child has the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power....."

With such a faith in children's potentialities, Sri Aurobindo wants us to use these innate potentialities of children, by appealing to these qualities. 'Instead of stupid and dry spelling and reading books, looked on as a dreary and ungrateful task', he says, children should be introduced gradually-by rapidly progressive stages, to the most interesting parts of their own literature and the life around them and behind them and they should be put before them in such a way as to attract and appeal to their innate qualities.

64. Sri Aurobindo et. al. p. 27.

65. Sri Aurobind et. al. p. 28.

How penetrating indeed it is when Aurobindo gives out : ⁶⁶

“It is by allowing Nature to work that we get the benefit of the gifts she has bestowed on us. Humanity in its education of children has chosen to thwart and hamper her processes and, by so doing, has done much to thwart and hamper the rapidity of its onward march. Happily, saner ideas are now beginning to prevail. But the way has not yet been found.

“.....The first work is to interest the child in life, work and knowledge with the utmost thoroughness, to give him mastery of the medium he must use. Afterwards, the rapidity with which he will learn will make up for any delay in taking up regular studies, and it will be found that, where now he learns a few things badly, then he will learn many things thoroughly well.”

Thus, it becomes obvious that Sri Aurobindo unlocks the key to greater knowledge through thoroughness and mastery of whatever is learnt — the perfection of the medium and the instrument are all that is needed at the beginning by way of a strong but surer ground work.

Aurobindo, in his line of thinking, follows largely the Indian system of psychology, according to which, the instrument of the educationist is the mind or *antah-karana*, which consists of four layers,—the reservoir of past mental impression, the *citta* or store-house of memory as distinguished from the specific act of memory, the mind proper or *manas* (the sixth sense of our Indian psychology), the intellect or *buddhi* which is the real instrument of thought and there is a fourth layer of faculty which, according to Sri Aurobindo, ‘not as yet entirely developed in man, is attaining gradually to a wider development and more perfect evolution’. He refers to the fourth layer of faculty as ‘the powers peculiar to the highest stratum of knowledge chiefly known to us from the phenomena of genius,—‘sovereign discernment, intuitive perception of truth, plenary inspiration of speech, direct vision of knowledge to an extent

often amounting to revelation, making a man a prophet of truth.'

Aurobindo's unique contribution to educational thought rather lies in his observation that 'these powers of genius are rare in their higher development, though many possess them imperfectly or by flashes'. Such powers, says Aurobindo, 'are still greatly distrusted by the critical reason of mankind because of the admixture of error, caprice and a biased imagination which obstructs and distorts their perfect workings'.

Aurobindo is strong and vehement in his forceful plea that 'the element of genius in the pupil'—a mighty and baffling element sometimes, must be recognised and encouraged, their imperfect development must be perfected. More often than not, in crowded classes, the teacher seldom recognises the genius or the unique element in the pupil though extraordinary and naturally, such a phenomenon of genius is neglected. It is here where the intelligent teacher has to be alert and keep his eyes open to such rare qualities as may be noticed (though very often they go unnoticed) and take care to nourish them. Aurobindo puts it so aptly when he says :⁶⁷

"Yet it is clear that humanity could not have advanced to its present stage if it had not been for the help of these faculties, and it is a question with which educationists have not yet grappled, what is to be done with this mighty and baffling element, the element of genius in the pupil. The mere instructor does his best to discourage and stifle genius, the more liberal teacher welcomes it. Faculties so important to humanity cannot be left out of our consideration. It is foolish to neglect them. Their imperfect development must be perfected, the admixture of error, caprice and biased fancifulness must be carefully and wisely removed. But the teacher cannot do it; he would eradicate the good corn as well as the tares if he interfered. Here, as in all educational operations, he can only put the growing soul into the way of its own perfection."

67. Sri Aurobindo et. al.: op. cit., p. 20.

Chapter XXVIII

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF SWAMI DAYANAND

VALUE OF BRAHMACHARYA :

Of the different Ashramas in the Hindu fold, Swami Dayanand attaches the greatest importance to that of the 'Brahmacharya Ashrama'. This, he says, is meant primarily for the acquisition of education, discipline and bodily strength. Rightly understood, considering the duties of every individual, every *ashrama* is of course the highest, in its own way. To begin with, Brahmacharya is nothing but the early adolescence of our modern classification, though in the strict Hindu religious connotation, it would signify 'a period of studies, vigorously undertaken under the disciplined care and observation of a properly chosen Guru.' Swami Dayanand advocates that children would do well to be told that their well-being lies in preserving the virile fluid, and their misery in wasting it. Perhaps, the evils of masturbation and self-abuse, which are often indulged in by growing adolescents in educational institutions, should open our eyes to the need for a sound system of moral and sex education. 'After all, 'brahmacharya', in the true sense of the term, if well observed, conduces to strength of body, mind and soul. Who can deny its soundness?

ROLE OF PARENTS IN EDUCATING CHILDREN :

'Swami Dayanand prescribes a code of conduct for children, for their upbringing and further education. In this, he assigns a leading rôle to the parents. "The parents," he says, "should inculcate in children the habit of self-restraint, love of learning and good company. Pernicious games, unnecessary weeping and laughing, quarrel, pleasure, moroseness, undue attachment to an object, envy, ill-will etc. are to be shunned. They should see to it that the qualities of truthfulness, courage, perseverance, cheer-

fulness etc. be imbibed.”¹ While no one can deny that the qualities that are to be engendered in children are worthy of encouragement, to what extent, they can be rigidly emphasized is a matter which has to be left in the hands of the parents. After all, families differ and naturally therefore, the kind of emphasis will vary from family to family, depending upon familial environments and various other factors.

MORAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN :

He advocates a kind of moral education for children by the parents, right from the age of five onwards. It partakes of the nature of ‘Do’s and Don’ts’ but now-a-days, it may be questionable whether such a kind of moral education can stand the test of time. Of course, parents have immense responsibilities in educating the young, and theirs is greater than anybody else. Very often, every parent exercises and exerts his moral influence on his children in his own, inimitable but subtle ways and it has its own values. But, what is to be wondered at, is whether a rigid code could be strictly adhered to, in these days of a ‘fast life’. “Only those persons have their children learned, mannerly and well-educated”, Swami Dayanand observes, “who never show undue affection to them and chastise them properly.”² He goes further, and says, “But mother, father and preceptor should not chastise them with malice or ill-will. They should exhibit awe but intrinsic kindness”.³ It becomes rather evident and reasonable also that children should not be unnecessarily chastised or villified so that inhibitions may not set in.

SEPARATE SCHOOLS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS :

Dayanand does not seem to favour co-education, which is now-a-days growingly recognised as not very much

1. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand, Edited by N. B. Sen, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1964, 1st Edition, p. 52.

2. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand, p. 52.

3. *Ibid.*

an evil, either at the primary level, where children are innocent or at the higher level, where they develop into mature adults. "As soon as they are eight years old," observes Dayanand, "girls should be sent to girls' school and boys to boys' schools. They should not be put in charge of teachers of bad character, whether male or female." It is clear, that he wants teachers to be men and women of sterling character, — a very laudable virtue indeed in a teacher.

Swami Dayanand foresees the modern trend in education, for instance; 'compulsory education' which is enforced according to the Directive Principle of the Indian Constitution. "Nobody should be allowed, under State rules," he asserts, "to keep his daughter and son at home after the age of eight years. They must be sent to school and should not be allowed to marry before the completion of education."⁵ It may be remembered that Swami Dayanand lived in the last century, when education was not widespread and early (prepuberty) marriages were quite common. Himself a reformer, he carried a crusading war against hedged-in and out-worn social practices of the day. Rightly did he locate the weak spots of his time, and crusade for a reform at the basal level. If only the principle that 'no one should marry before the completion of education' is strictly adhered to and enforced in action,— which is nothing but the principle of postponing the legal marriageable age, the problem of 'population explosion' could be mitigated to some extent, even now.

That Dayanand favours only separate schools for boys and girls, at the primary stages, becomes very clear when he says :⁶

"The place of study should be secluded and girls' and boys' schools should be two kosas (about four miles) apart. The teachers, servants and menials should all be females in girls' schools and males in boys' schools. No boy of five years' age should be

4. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op. cit., p. 53.

5. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op. cit., p. 53.

6. *Ibid.*

allowed an entry into a girls' school, nor a girl of that age into a boys' school."

REVERENCE FOR PARENTS :

He considers it the chief business of the parents, the preceptor and the relations that they should 'decorate their children with the ornaments of highest education, training qualities, actions and habits' of a worthwhile nature. Similarly he considers it incumbent on the part of parents, rather their highest religious obligation, to devote all their energy, mind and wealth to the imparting of knowledge to the children — what a laudable achievement should it be ! Swami Dayanand would like children not to abandon the worship of their parents—the worship of visible, well-wishing actual Gods. It only shows that he holds parents in high regard and has very great reverence for them. In Indian society, this principle of 'reverence for the parents' has been an age-old and time-honoured one and this is still persisting today in a faint form — as long as parents conduct themselves well and in a way to deserve respect and regard, reverence for one's parents will not die out so soon.

PRECEPTOR HELD IN HIGH REGARD :

Dayanand holds the preceptor in very high regard but at the same time he wants him to be free from prejudices, accept all those broad principles on which all religions are unanimous, reject differences and behave affectionately. He believes that, if only the learned men free themselves from petty differences, much good can be done to the world. He is of opinion that 'when there is a lack of good teachers and sincere listeners, blind tradition would ensue. But when true teachers come and preach the truth, this blind tradition comes to an end and a course of enlightenment begins to run'. He considers it the duty of the preceptor to impart the right sort of education to the devotees of learning. Rightly does he enumerate certain qualities as essential in a pupil if he is to acquire knowledge, righteousness, capacity to receive instruction and knowledge;

love for knowledge and civility in behaviour towards the preceptor.

THE RATIONAL APPROACH IN EDUCATION :

Swami Dayanand is highly rational in his approach to matters concerning education. "Whatever is read or taught," he says, "should be rational."⁷ He comes very near the modern approach, in his emphasis on 'rationalism in education.' The real teacher," he says, "is he who has realised all knowledge beginning from the Earth right up to God."⁸ But this comes as a surprise to the ordinary mortal who starts wondering whether any such teacher will be available, unless one is encyclopaedic and a seer, besides. This sometimes looks like an utopian idealism.

TRUE RELIGION—A COHESIVE FORCE :

It is a well-known fact that true religion is a cohesive force in a nation. Dayanand feels that 'as long as mankind is not freed from the habit of falsely denouncing each other's religion, the world cannot be happy'. He holds it as certain that the differences of the learned people are the cause of the differences among the common people and as such, if learned men rise above their selfish motives and work for the welfare of all, they can be united today and be of one religion. What is basic truth is common to all religions but the dispute is about non-essentials only. Truthfulness, non-violence, mercy and other such qualities are good qualities in every religion and wrangling, envy, malice, falsehood etc. are bad in all religions.

EDUCATION HELD ALOFT :

Dayanand holds aloft education as the greatest and most valuable asset for a person. "A man," he says, "without education is only a man in name."⁹ He considers it a bounden duty of a man 'to get education, become virtuous, be free from malice and preach for the well-being

7. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op. cit. p. 158.

8. *Ibid.*

9. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op. cit., p. 147.

of people',—advancing the cause of righteousness. The highest object of man's life, according to Swami Dayanand, is 'to free himself entirely from all the three classes of pain'.

IDEAS ON SPEECH :

Swami Dayanand, who was an outstanding and erudite scholar, was also an eloquent speaker. His ideas on 'Speech' deserve careful consideration. "One should be free from anger," he says, "shun bitter language, should speak only true and sweet words, and avoid talkativeness. One should speak neither more nor less than what is necessary."¹⁰ There is some wisdom in what he says. If one is to establish a 'rapport' naturally, words or the language used, should be polished and sweet. Bitterness in language only arouses animosities and rancour. It is too well known, that 'brevity is the soul of wit.'

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO STUDY :

Study is such an important thing in the life of a student that those things which disturb or stand in the way of it have to be removed. Dayanand is of opinion that certain undesirable ways of living deprive students in particular, of the benefits of *Brahmacharya* and learning, and keep them unhealthy and ignorant. He would urge the Government and the people to remove such of those obstacles as standing in the way of students' regular studies, so as to enable them to devote their entire attention to the acquisition of learning, — the end in view for a learner. Dayanand being a social reformer to the core, opposed superstitions of all kinds and waged a war against them. It was his considered opinion that, ignorance is the cause of belief in ghosts and evil spirits and attributing diseases to supernatural elements, and eventually falling an easy prey to all sorts of black-magic, quacks in medicine and false mystic formulae—mantra tantra.

FIT PERSONS TO TEACH :

He prescribes certain primary qualifications for a teacher "Only such persons are fit to undertake the work of teach-

10. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op, cit., p. 172.

ing", he says, "as are thoroughly educated and virtuous". He lays emphasis on thoroughness of knowledge as one of the fundamental requisites of a good teacher, and good conduct also as another important aspect. After all, the teacher sets an example to the taught, and it is not unreasonable to demand these qualities of teachers if true learning is to take place—if learning is to be effectual.

TEACHER-PUPIL RELATION :

Regarding 'teacher—pupil relationship', his approach is the same as in ancient times in India. What Dayanand stipulates in this context is that 'the teachers and the pupils should imbibe good characteristics. The teachers should so try as to make their pupils true in words, thoughts and deeds, cultured, self-controlled, mannerly, physically and morally strong.....The students should be self-controlled, quiet, devoted to teachers, thoughtful, diligent and should so try as to achieve perfect learning, full age, unalloyed virtue and love of work'.¹¹ A little reflection only shows that Dayanand is trying to recapture the spirit of the *Upanishadic* times, and restore the same spiritual atmosphere in the matter of teacher-pupil relationship. When all is said and done, whether this can be attempted with success at the present moment, is rather debatable.

ON TEACHING :

Swami Dayanand, having been an outstanding religious preacher, besides an erudite Vedic scholar, looks at teaching from an ethical angle which may not be always possible today. The purpose of education, apart from its general values, is quite different for different persons, depending upon the goal which each sets forth for oneself and tries to achieve. Viewed in this light, it might seem reasonable, that teaching should have a relevance to the aim. If the aim is ethical, naturally, the instruction must be in keeping with the means for achievement of the set goal. According to Dayanand, who always valued high

11. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand: op. cit., P. 178.

the ethical side of life, 'learning' connoted righteous living and self-realization. That being the goal, he considers instruction as that 'which is conducive to learning, civility, righteousness, and sense-control and which frees men from the blemish of ignorance etc.'¹² In his view, the chief duty of learned men is 'to put before the public, through preachings or through writings the real nature of truth and untruth'. The "truth" he says, "lies in speaking, writing or believing in connection with a thing as it actually is."¹³ He goes further and observes:¹⁴

"The inner self of man is the knower of truth and untruth, but through selfishness, stubbornness, malevolence and ignorance, he leaves truth and inclines towards untruth."

He brings to bear his knowledge of Shastras in regard to the ways of examining truth and distinguishing it from its opposite. He enumerates five principles or ways of examination and discernment of truth as different from untruth and strongly recommends that 'whatever is in consonance with the rules of conduct of the learned, truthful people is acceptable and the contrary is unacceptable.' He upholds that 'purity of the self should be attained through education'.¹⁵ "Our only object is", he affirms, "that mankind may progress and prosper, man may know what truth is and what untruth is ; they may forsake untruth and accept truth."¹⁶

The hallmark of a learned man, according to Swami Dayanand, is that he loves to distinguish truth from untruth and embracing the former rejects the latter. "When men of learning," he declares, as though in a prophetic vein, "fail to ascertain truth and untruth, ignorant laity falls into a deep darkness and suffers much pain."¹⁷ In this connection, it may be remembered that, times have changed con-

12. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op. cit., p. 178

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. N. B. Sen. (Ed.): op. cit., p. 179.

17. N. B. Sen (Ed.): op. cit., p. 180.

siderably since the beginning of this century, and more revolutionary changes have taken place in the recent decade in India,* especially since Independence. With the inauguration of the Five Year Plans and the launching out of the Community Development Programmes in the country, we are witnessing today an awakening of the masses, a mass upheaval and social consciousness. All these are no doubt engineering tremendous changes in the minds and hearts of the common man, with the result, that we no longer today face the so-called 'ignorant laity' of the last century in its pristine form, but a different personality in the making.

"Therefore", declares Swami Dayanand, "it is the chief duty of mankind to lovingly hold, oral and written discussions in order to achieve victory for truth and defeat for untruth. If this course is not adopted, the progress of mankind is impossible."¹⁸ It is clear, that Dayanand lays much stress on 'truth' which is the greatly respected principle since ancient days in our country. One can easily understand its influence and impact on Dayanand, who was a Vedic scholar and a social reformer of his times. Dayanand's much respected principle of 'truth' is even today the constitutionally accepted principle in our country. *Satyam Eva Jayate*. Truth alone triumphs and not untruth.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION :

We are witnessing today threats from outside. But the crisis is sometimes more from within than from without. There are forces inside the country which are threatening to destroy the cohesive elements of unity and break them asunder due to the operation of fissiparous tendencies. Right at this moment, the leaders of the country are engaged in thinking out ways and means of emotionally integrating the entire nation. In this context, Swami Dayanand's appeal to national unity seems to bear a special relevance to the issue we are concerned with. Dayanand pertinently observes:-¹⁹

18. *Ibid*.

19. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand — Edited by N. B. Sen, New Book Society of India, p. 180.

“It is very hard to shake off linguistic differences, cultural angularities, and estrangement due to customs and manners. Unless it is done, it is difficult to derive the fullest benefit and achieve the goal in view.”

Swami Dayanand's appeal to national unity and emotional integration is quite characteristic of the intense spirit and emotion with which our late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once spoke at Bangalore in his equal concern for emotional integration. To quote Pandit Nehru :²⁰

“We should not become parochial, narrow-minded, provincial, communal, and caste-minded, because we have a great mission to perform. Let us, the citizens of the Republic of India, stand up straight, with straight backs, and look up at the skies, keeping our feet firmly planted on the ground and bring about this synthesis, this integration of the Indian people. . . . The main thing we have to keep in mind is the emotional integration of India. We must guard against being swept away by momentary passion, whether it is religion misapplied to politics or communalism or provincialism or casteism. We have to build up this great country into a mighty nation, mighty not in the ordinary sense of the word, that is having great armies and all that, but mighty in thought, mighty in action, mighty in culture and mighty in its peaceful service of humanity.”

SCHEME OF STUDIES :

Being a Védic Scholar of great repute, he attaches great importance to study of Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishadas and Scriptures. Speaking about Scriptures, he says :²¹

20. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches 1953—1957, Vol. III, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, p. 35.

21. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand, Edited by N. B. Sen, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1964, p. 156.

“High-minded sages have put in their books intricate subjects in a very easy form. This advantage cannot be derived from the books of petty-minded authors. The object of sages is to put difficult things in an easy form, so that common people may get the maximum good from the minimum labour. But petty-minded writers put every thing in so difficult a form that you may work very hard and get very little. The study of the books of common authors is like digging a mountain and getting a shell, while the study of the sage is like diving once and obtaining precious pearls.”

Dr. Radhakrishnan also echoes the same spirit when he observes :²²

“Our text-books should emphasize the way in which our culture has grown from the time of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa down to our own time, how it has shown a power of self-renewal. Bad text-books spoil the minds of the young, corrupt their tastes and degrade their natures. A sound system of education should give to the diversity of our country a certain unity of purpose and feeling.”

Again, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's thinking along lines similar to that of Swami Dayanand, becomes evident when he remarks about the role of writers :

“Writers through their publications can give a proper perspective to their readers. You establish a communion between yourself and your audience and if the ideas which you introduce are noble, are of good report, truthful, you will spread enlightenment among the people themselves. When we are, therefore, face to face with this particular problem, the responsibility of the Writers should also be regarded as enormous and, I hope that you will do your best to spread right ideas, sane thinking and proper feeling. If you are able to do so,

22. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, p. 341.

you will have done your share in the building up of our country and the building up of a new world."

To Dr. Radhakrishnan, literary contributions help serve as the most effective means for achieving the purpose of raising the quality of human life. Rightly does he conceive of the role of literary artists as lying in reckoning 'with the evils from which we are suffering, educating the human mind, removing those evils and establishing a more decent kind of society.'

Swami Dayanand impresses upon the need for acquiring the correct knowledge of the Scriptures, as a result of which the scope of one's attainments would grow wider and the love of learning would become greater than before.

Speaking about great books, Dr. Radhakrishnan says:²⁴

"Great books foster the psychological health of the reader. They induce in us largeness of mind and normative vision. They give us moral contentment. Indulgence is treason to civilized values".

VALUE OF FOREIGN TRAVEL :

Regarding foreign travel and its utility, no educationist would ordinarily minimise its educative values. Travel broadens one's understanding and enlarges the scope of one's knowledge. Swami Dayanand encourages foreign travel, provided the person who goes out, guards himself against being misled by spurious propaganda. "If our actions are good," observes Swami Dayanand, "there is no harm in going to foreign lands." Speaking about the values of foreign travel, what Dayanand remarks is :²⁵

"The bogey of untouchability and loss of religion current in these days is due to misrepresentation and

23. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 207.

24. S. Radhakrishnan: op. cit., p. 77.

25. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand, Edited by N. E. Sen, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1964, p. 78.

ignorance. Those people who do not hesitate to go to other countries, come in contact with various people, know their customs and manners expand their kingdom and business, acquire boldness, imbibe their merits, shake off their weaknesses and thus become powerful."

It is a well-known fact that in ancient times, we helped to promote understanding of the different peoples and institutions of our country by means of pilgrimages. But now-a-days, with the loosening and the weakening of the hold of religion and the widening of the frontiers of knowledge, reason has taken a different stand and the modern man is rather 'tourist-minded'. In ancient times, even when communications were difficult, still people used to travel from one part of the world to another, to visit holy places. That only shows, how travel has been an essential means of cultural understanding and integration.

Now-a-days, with the rapid growth of modern transport, not to speak of space travel, the boundaries of the world are being reduced to the dimensions of a small country—the world is converging into one society. Therefore, at the present moment, the need to understand other peoples and their ways is becoming imperative. We are living in an age of international collaboration, which is the only way for human survival. Speaking about 'tourism' Sarvarpelli Radhakrishnan observes, that it 'widens our horizon, promotes understanding, stimulates trade, fosters fellowship'²⁶ In his inaugural address to the International Hotel Conference, Dr. Radhakrishnan remarked :²⁷

"Patriotism is not enough. Nationalism is a local interest. The happiness of the human race is of greater importance than the triumph of this or that nation. International friendship and co-operation are our great needs. We must understand one

26. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, Third Series, p. 379.

27. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan, First Series, p. 328.

another and learn to live together. Nothing helps his process of mutual understandings than travel."

WOMEN'S EDUCATION ;

In the great days of our country women were treated as equals of men, though not their duplicates. In the Upanishadic period of our history, Gargi and several others were the gems among the women of India who became learned only after reading the Vedas and other Scriptures. In the long history of India, many women have attained greatness in various spheres of life and culture—political and aesthetic, moral and spiritual. And this greatness they achieved sometimes, with the encouragement of men and in some instances inspite of their discouragement and prejudices. As Dr. Radhakrishnan observes, while speaking of 'Women of India' :²⁸

"India, in every generation has produced, millions of women who have never found fame, but whose daily existence has helped to civilize the race, and whose warmth of heart, self-sacrificing zeal, unassuming loyalty and strength in suffering, when subjected to trials of extreme severity, are among the glories of this ancient race."

Quite like Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Swami Dayanand also tends to view women's education with great favour. Dayanand's remark in this connection runs as follows:²⁹

"If women are not taught the Scriptures including the Vedas, how would they read the *mantras* with a proper accent and speak *Sanskrita* on the occasion of *Yajna*? If men are educated and women uneducated, or women educated and men uneducated, then the house would be a place of constant warfare between the Gods and demons and there would be no happiness."

28. Occasional Speeches and Writings, S. Radhakrishnan I-Series, 387.

29. Wit and Wisdom of Swami Dayanand, Edited by N. B. Sen, 1964, p. 195.

Dayanand sees no reason, why women should not be educated? *He foresees the modern trend of women teachers working in large numbers in educational institutions* and a significant proportion of others working in other departments. His observations on the need for 'women's education' seem to be pertinent and are in tune with the spirit of our times today. "If women are not taught", he points out, "how will they be able to work as teachers in Girls Schools? Nor can they take part in the affairs of the Government or in the administration of justice and life. Household affairs, conjugal happiness and home-keeping are the things which can never be satisfactorily accomplished unless women are well educated."³⁰

That Dayanand, in his passion for social reforms was far ahead of the times becomes evident when he says that "females should perform *yoga* and should be given lessons on dietry, clothing, sitting, standing, talking and associating with elders and those who are younger in age, according to the dictates of propriety."³¹ It is clear that his scheme of studies is wide enough,—rather embracing a comprehensive course. He includes the study of 'Mechanical Art, Arithmetic, Vedas, Scriptures, Grammar, Theology, Medicine, etc. as necessary for women. He upholds the principle of equal justice for men and women. "It is a great injustice" he remarks, "that women should be kept like prisoners within the house and men may go free. Do not women desire to enjoy fresh air, walk in the open country and see the beauties of nature."³² Dayanand's liberal outlook towards women at a time when peoples' minds were not ready enough to accept the revolutionary ideas is highly appreciable, though this might have aroused loud opposition on the part of the insular public—with the dominant characteristics of a closed society of those days.

30. Op. cit., p. 195.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

CHAPTER XXIX

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND IDEALS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION :

Swami Vivekananda's great and cherished ideal was 'man-making education'. What did he mean by that kind of education? According to Swami Vivekananda, what our country needs are 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face.' His concept of 'man-making education' is all comprehensive in the sense it embraces man-making religion, man-making theories and man-making education all round.

His greatest concern was for the masses during his short but glorious life. Nobody worked with such zeal and devotion as Swami Vivekananda, for the noble cause of educating the masses. His thinking was in terms of the steady growth of man, which he considered to be the end and aim of all training—to *make the man grow*. Real education, according to him is that 'which enables one to stand on his own legs'. He characterised the system of education obtained in his days,—in schools and Colleges, as only making a race of dyspeptics. He held with contempt the idea of working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence.

How does Swami Vivekananda define 'education'? "I never define anything", said the Swami once smiling, "Still, it may be described as a development of faculty, not by accumulation of words, or as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently."¹ The aim of such a training

1. Swami Vivekananda, *Our Women*, Advaita Ashrama Calcutta, 4th Edn. 1961, pp. 56—57.

is to bring under control the current and expression of will and make it more fruitful.

While he addresses himself whole-heartedly to the task of spreading education among the masses, what he has in mind is the line of positive teaching. "Mere book-learning won't do" says Swami Vivekananda. Continuing, he says, "we want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet."² He feels that our primary part of the duty lies in imparting true education to all men and women in our society. As an outcome of that education, he says that they will of themselves be able to distinguish the good from the bad and will spontaneously eschew the latter. Provided it is done like that, it may not be necessary to pull down or set up anything in society by coercion.

According to him, what is 'true education'? He observes :³

"Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and deliver good lectures. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?"

BROAD-BASED CONCEPT OF EDUCATION :

His concept of education is broad-based. How ? It is clear when he observes :⁴

"What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language, and Wes-

2. Swami Vivekananda, op. cit., p. 41.

3. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati Memorial Edn., Part VII; Advaita Ashrama, Himalayas, 1922, Himalayan Series, No. XLV, p. 146.

4. Swami Vivekananda, EDUCATION, (Ed.) By T. S. Avinashilingam Page-7.

tern science ; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day."

That his idea of education is broad-based becomes still more vivid when he lays emphasis on *practicality*, which is the need of the times. For, he says :⁵

"Sit at their feet (Westerners) and learn from them the arts, industries and the practicality necessary for the struggle for existence. You will be esteemed once more when you will become fit. . . . without the necessary preparation, what will mere shouting in the congress avail ?"

How practical is Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy ? We get glimpses of it when he notes :⁶

"By degrees, the heart has to be strengthened. If one man is made, it equals the result of a hundred thousand lectures. Making the mind and the lips at one, the ideas have to be practised in life. This is what Sri Ramakrishna meant by "allowing no theft in the chamber of thought" You have to be practical in all spheres of work. The whole country has been ruined by masses of theories."

While reading the passage cited above, one feels as though, Swami Vivekananda has been rather prophetic in foreseeing the educational needs of modern India—the needs of science and technology, with their emphasis on practicality and learning to live in a better way than before.

As emphasised in the Gita, that 'Atman is not to be gained by the weak', his stress was always on a strong body. Referring to this aspect of physical culture, Swami Vivekananda says :⁷

"If there is no strength in body and mind, the Atman cannot be realised. First you have to build the body

5. The complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,⁸ Part VII, op. cit., p. 145.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

by good nutritious food—then only will the mind be strong. The mind is but the subtle part of the body. You must retain great strength in your mind and words. “I am low,” “I am low,” repeating these ideas in the mind, man belittles and degrades himself.”

The passage quoted above only conveys the current trend in our educational system where the emphasis increasingly tends to be on the maintenance of proper physical standards of efficiency i.e. the present movement of the Ministry of Education, Government of India introducing a ‘National Physical Efficiency Drive’ throughout the country.

It was his strong conviction that those who are always down-hearted and dispirited in this life, can do no concrete work—those who always wail and moan. It is only the heroes who enjoy the earth and not those who fear. His creed was ‘Be a hero’, always say, “I have no fear.” Tell this to everybody—“Have no fear.” To him ‘fear is death, fear is sin, fear is hell, fear is unrighteousness, fear is wrong life. All the negative thoughts and ideas that are in this world have proceeded from this evil spirit of fear.’⁸ His creed was thus fearlessness—*abhaya*.

NEED FOR PERSONAL CONTACT :

Does Swami Vivekananda favour any particular system of education for the country ? Yes. He endorses the ancient Indian system of education in which there was sufficient scope for close and personal contact between the teacher and the taught. This personal contact which is very valuable in any system of education, is woefully lacking in the modern educational system from which, graduates are turned out at all levels on a mass scale. Though it may not be possible at present to reproduce the ancient educational system or reinstate it in its pristine form as in the past, it should be possible for us to introduce the essential elements of it with suitable modifications. To what extent this may be possible,

8. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

is a matter of expediency. Referring to this ancient system of education, Swami Vivekananda observes

- "My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher—Gurugriha-vasa. Without the personal life of a teacher there would be no education. Take your Universities. What have they done ?
- They have not produced one original man. They are merely an examining body. The idea of the sacrifice for the common weal is not yet developed in our nation."

That there is a need for personal contact in education as emphasised by Swami Vivekananda, is very well understandable even at present, especially when there is a lack of self-discipline among the youths of the country, as is evidenced at present by the mass student unrest and strikes and closure of colleges for indefinite periods. The introduction of the principle of personal and close contact of the taught with the teacher is likely to develop qualities like self-restraint and self-discipline, provided, the classes are not overcrowded as at present but of a sizable proportion. Will this be feasible ?

It is more than half a century since Swami Vivekananda made his observation. Since then, the system of education in the country has undergone several changes—education has made rapid strides, the number of schools and colleges have increased several times, several courses of studies have been introduced. Therefore, his charge that 'universities have not done anything' and that 'they have not produced one original man', is not tenable by any standard, at present. One has to reckon with the time and its onward march. It is no doubt true that universities have not ceased to be just examining bodies. Though of course, considerable progress has been made in the field of research—pure science as well as applied and other fields, yet, they have not rendered the best. "The idea of the sacrifice for the common weal" which Swami Vivekananda deplored as not having developed in our nation in his days, is now gradually becoming stronger

and as education begins to spread, this consciousness will become wider than before.

EDUCATING THE MASSES :

He was deeply concerned with the masses and particularly their regeneration, at a time when there was not much social consciousness in the country as a whole—the privileged few did not very much bother about the under-privileged classes of society. Therefore, rightly did Swami Vivekananda observe :¹⁰

“I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.”

In this context, it is worth remembering that since Gandhiji came into the political picture in the country, a moral regeneration has been happening and much later, particularly since India's Independence the economic regeneration of the masses has been effectively percolating. The various Five-Year Plans, with their proper emphasis on special schemes for welfare of the weaker sections of the community, have taken care to bring social and economic benefits to the under-privileged and the masses at large, through education of various kinds. The introduction of universal, compulsory, free education in the country has been a forerunner of social and economic reform, which should not be forgotten.

EVILS OF ADHIKARI VADA :

In his equal concern for the masses, he does not tolerate the doctrine of special rights and privileges—*Adhikari-vada* and Swamiji while pointing out the evils that have

10.* *Ibid.*, p. 152.

resulted from it spoke to the following effect, in a rather vehement fashion :¹¹

“With all my respects for the Rishis of yore I cannot but denounce their method in instructing the people. They always enjoined upon them to do certain things but took care never to explain to them the reason why. This method was pernicious to the very core, and instead of enabling men to attain the end it laid upon their shoulders a mass of meaningless non-sense. Their excuse for keeping the end hidden from view was that the people could not have understood their real meaning even if they had presented it to them, not being worthy recipients. This *Adhikarivada* is the outcome of pure selfishness. They know that by this enlightenment of their special subject they would lose their superior position of instructors to the people. Hence their endeavour to support this theory.”

Swamiji, while vehement in denouncing the doctrine of *Adhikarivada*, advocates on the other hand, a favourable attitude on the part of the educators, towards the educands. “If you consider a man too weak to receive these lessons” appeals Swamiji, “you should try the more to teach and educate him ; you should give him the advantage of more teaching, instead of less, to train up his intellect, so as to enable him to comprehend the more subtle problems ” He points out that the “advocates of *Adhikarivada* ignored the tremendous fact of the infinite possibilities of the human soul.” To him, knowledge represents freedom from the errors which ignorance leads to. He is particular that knowledge should be widespread and the highest knowledge—knowledge of the highest spiritual truths should be preached, broadcast. “Preach the highest truths broadcast”, says Swami Vivekananda. This, he says, will confer the greatest blessing on the masses, unshackle their bondages and uplift the whole nation. These are days, when popular education is becoming widespread due to the implementation of several educational measures like : Adult Education Pro-

11. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

grammes, Social Education, Further Education, Radio Forums, and various other schemes of community education. It is not often that the Social Education Organizer or the educator meets with success in his efforts to educate the public. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda pertinently remarks : ¹²

“Every man is capable of receiving knowledge if it is imparted in his own language. A teacher who cannot convince others should weep on account of his own inability to teach the people in their own language, instead of cursing them and dooming them to live in ignorance and superstition, setting up the plea that the highest knowledge is not for them. Speak out the truth boldly without any fear that it will puzzle the weak. Men are selfish ; they do not want others to come up to the same level of their knowledge, for fear of losing their own privilege and prestige over others.”

Will such a zeal and passion seize those enthusiasts who are engaged in educating the masses, —at least those, engaged in Extension Work in the various nation-wide Community Development Programmes ?

While Swami Vivekananda wants to enthuse the masses by enlightening them on various matters, he does not advocate a uniform pattern or system of education, habits, laws and rules for all. That is a great mistake, he says. He wants them to be different for different men and nations, in conformity with their differences of temperament. “What will it avail,” points out Swamiji, “if one tries to make them all uniform, by compulsion ?”

END OF KNOWLEDGE :

His emphasis is on knowledge of one's own self. “When you know yourself you know all” says Swami Vivekananda. When he says this, he only affirms the Upanishadic truth. Drawing largely from the Vedas and Upanishads, he points out ; ¹³

12. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 421.

“Knowledge is to find unity in the midst of diversity—to establish unity among things which appear to us to be different from one another. That particular relation by which man finds this sameness is called Law. This is what is known as “Natural Law”.

“..... Our education, intelligence and thought are all spiritual, all find expression in religion. In the West, their manifestation is in the external—in the physical and social planes. Thinkers in ancient India gradually came to understand that the idea of separateness was erroneous, that there was a connection among all those distinct objects—there was a unity which pervaded the whole universe..... In reality, the metaphysical and the physical universe are one, and the name of this one is Brahman ; and the perception of separateness is an error—they called it *Maya*, *Avidya* or nescience. This is the end of knowledge.”

LEARN FROM OTHERS BUT KEEP YOUR OWN :

Swami Vivekananda, who had widely travelled, was never parochial. He was always for learning anything good from others—be it individuals or nation. He did not boast, he knew everything, though he was an outstanding scholar in several branches of learning. To quote an instance by way of illustration : 14

“....., you must understand this, my friend, that we have many things to learn from other nations. The man who says he has nothing more to learn is already at his last gasp. The nation that says it knows everything is on the very brink of destruction ! “As long as I live so long do I learn.” But, one point to note here is that when we take anything from others we must mould it after our own way. We shall add to our stock what others have to teach, but we must always be careful to keep intact what is essentially our own.”

It is thus evident, that Swami Vivekananda is drawing pointed attention to the fact that we should, while learning from others, try to keep our own and not be mad or crazy after things which are alien to us. He deplures, that in our country there is the 'terrible mania of becoming Westernised' which has seized upon us like a plague. Does not his remark hold good even to-day ? What he aims at is, assimilation of knowledge and not its indigestion as is the case at present.

It is very remarkable indeed, when Swami Vivekananda thoughtfully remarks : ¹⁵

"Of course new things have to be learnt, have to be introduced and worked out ; but is that to be done by sweeping away all that is old, just because it is old ? What new things have you learnt ? Not any—Save and except a jumble of words'. What really useful science or art have you acquired ? The carpenters of your towns cannot even turn out a decent pair of doors. Whether they are made for a hut or a mansion is hard to make out ! They are only good at buying foreign tools, as if that is all of carpentry ! What we possessed as our own is all passing away, and yet, all that we have learnt from foreigners is the art of speechifying. Merely reading and talking !"

COMBINE UTILITY WITH ART:

The remarks cited above, are realistic no doubt, referring to the situation prevailing at his time when the Britishers were the rulers and the country men had no freedom to do things independently. Since then, India has won freedom and something new and suitable to the exigencies of the time to make up for the lapses is striking its roots and becoming stable with us. What we will be well advised to do, is as suggested by Swami Vivekananda, to combine the utility of the West, with the art of the East. For he observes pertinently : ¹⁶

15. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 376—377

“The Westerner looks for utility in everything, when with us Art is everywhere. With the Western education, those beautiful *ghaties* of ours have been discarded, and enamel glasses have usurped their place in our homes! Thus, the idea of utility has been imbibed by us to such an extent as to make it look short of the ridiculous. Now what we need is the combination of art and utility. Japan has done that very quickly, and so she has advanced by giant strides. Now in their turn, the Japanese are going to teach the Westerners.”

Though Japan has gone through several vicissitudes since Swami Vivekananda visited Japan, yet it is true, even to-day that she has remarkably progressed since the ravages of the Second World War. Apart from his allusion to Japan and her progress, Swami Vivekananda particularly draws our attention to the need for developing an all-round elegance in everything we do,—in eating and drinking, in our homes and surroundings. He deplores very much that “we are throwing away what we have as our own, and labouring in vain to make others’ ideals and habits ours”. “Those national virtues that we had are gradually disappearing,” regrets Swami Vivekananda “and we are not acquiring any of the Western ones either! In sitting, walking, talking, etc., there was in the olden days a traditional specific trait of our own—that is now gone and withal we have not the ability to take in the Western modes of etiquette. Those ancient religious rites, practices, studies, etc., that were left to us, you are consigning to the tide-waters to be swept away.¹⁷ What Swami Vivekananda aims at, is the assimilation and absorption of the best elements in others, but at the same time keeping our own in their essentials. What he dislikes is blind imitation of the West. What he is particular about is that we should always preserve in full our characteristic nationality.

Swami Vivekananda specially favours the idea of boys living with the Guru, in the same way as of old, with certain

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 376—377.

modifications, of course. What he says, is that with this education has to be combined modern Western science. Both, he points out, are absolutely necessary—combination of the old as well as the new

There is a tinge of naturalism in his educational philosophy when he says that 'true education is gained by constant living in communion with Nature. "Knowledge should be acquired in that way", observes Swami Vivekananda, "otherwise by educating yourself in the *tol** of a Pandit you will be only a human ape all your life. Commenting on the evils of the *tols*, he points out :¹⁸

"One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is like a blazing fire, and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. Mere reading that it is a sin to tell a lie will be of no use. Every boy should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya, and then, and then only, faith and Shraddha will come. Otherwise, why will not one who has no Shraddha and faith speak an untruth ? In our country, the imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. Later, the Pandits, by monopolising all knowledge and restricting it to the *tols*, have only brought the country to the brink of ruin. India had all good prospects so long as Tyagis (men of renunciation) used to impart knowledge."

GOAL OF EDUCATION—NOT A NARROW ONE:

What is the goal of education ? Commenting on the narrow goal of education of his days, Swami Vivekananda remarks pithily :¹⁹

"What is the goal of your education ? Either a clerkship or being a roughish lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistracy, which is another form of clerk-

Ancient Sanskrit boarding school, particularly in Bengal.

18. Swami Vivekananda's Works, Vol. V, p. 285.

19. Swami Vivekananda, Epistles, III Series, p. 180.

ship—is not that all ? What good will it do you or the country at large ? Open eyes and what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its wealth ! Will your education fulfil this want ?

That the scope for different job opportunities has widened since Swamiji's time has to be admitted, especially now, when there is equality of opportunity for all and there is no discrimination on any grounds. But yet, one thing seems certain, namely that, What Swamiji alludes to as 'the piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata' sounds like a prophetic statement, since even to-day, we are not able to successfully tackle and solve or meet the food crisis which we are facing in an acute form, inspite of all our ever expanding educational programmes. Swamiji's query whether our education will fulfil this want—piteous cry for food, seems to be quite relevant in the present context of the food situation in the country.

VALUE OF BOOKS IN LEARNING:

What about the value of books in learning ? He does not deny the value of books in increasing one's knowledge, though it was his conviction that the 'foundation of all knowledge is in every one of us'. He was particular that Scriptures should be studied. "For the attainment of *Gnana*, study of Scriptures is essential" says Swami Vivekananda. It was his ambition that books should be compiled in all the vernaculars as well as in English, with short stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Upanishads, etc., in very easy and simple language and these are to be given to our little boys to read. But at the same time, he was not one to believe that books could teach all and everything. He discouraged mere book learning as such, according to the tradition of his Master Shri Ramakrishna. He was largely inspired by the Vedas and therefore, he declares, "Personally I take as much of the Vedas as agrees with reason." "Of all the Scriptures of the world", says Swami Vivekananda "it is the Vedas alone that declares the study of the Vedas is secondary. The real study is that by which we realise the

Unchangeable." And that is neither reading, nor believing nor reasoning, but superconscious perception, or *Samadhi*."²⁰

How far are books really useful and helpful ? It is Swami Vivekananda's considered opinion that 'he whose book of the heart has been opened needs no other books. Their only value is to create desire in us. They are merely the experiences of others.' Rightly does Swami Vivekananda assess the proper place and value of books as creating the genuine desire in us to read and know more.

He has immense faith in the infinite capacities of the individuals and particularly in the inner light. Therefore, while speaking about books, Swami Vivekananda thoughtfully observes : ²¹

"Books suggest the inner light and the method of bringing that out but we can only understand them when we have earned the knowledge ourselves. When the inner light has flashed for you, let the books go, look only within, you have in you all and a thousand time more than is in all the books. Never lose faith in yourself, you can do anything in this universe. Never weaken, all power is yours."

The passage cited above, amply illustrates how much faith and confidence Swami Vivekananda had in the potentialities of the human being and his worth. He goes further and says, "If religion and life depend upon books or upon the existence of any prophet what-so-ever, then perish all religion and books! Religion is in us. No books or teachers can do more than help us to find it and even without them, we can get all truth within. Yet have gratitude for books and teachers without bondage to them....." ²² In a different context, he declared that "books are useless to us until our own book opens; then all other books are good so far as they confirm our *book*." 'Of what use is the

20. *Ibid.*

21. The complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII 1922, p. 83.

22 *Ibid.*, pp 83—84.

knowledge that is locked away in books', he said in speaking of the memory of Hindu boys.*

TRUE EDUCATION—MANIFESTATION OF PERFECTION IN MAN

True education, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and runs riot there ; undigested all one's life. "We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas" observes Swami Vivekananda. What he emphasises most is the assimilation of a few ideas and making them a part and parcel of one's life and character. Such an assimilation, if made possible, says Vivekananda, is far more educative in character than getting by heart a whole library. Commenting on the futility of mere information, he remarks ²³

"If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the *Rishis*."

Disapproving the idea of memorizing useless facts, he points out ; "Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some University degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this Education ?" ²⁴

To him, all knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside ; it is all inside. He considers the infinite library of the universe to be coming from the mind. Naturally, therefore, all education is nothing but the manifestation of the perfection already reached in man. "All knowledge therefore, says Swamiji, "secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, 'we are learning,' and the advance of knowledge is made by this process of uncovering." Continuing, he observes : "Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists

cf. The Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II, 1914, The Semi-Centenary Birthday Memorial.

23. EDUCATION, Swami Vivekananda, p. 6.

24. , *Ibid.*, p. 6.

in the mind ; suggestion is the fiction which brings it out. All knowledge and all power are within." ²⁵

He has abiding faith in 'concentration' as the best method by which to attain knowledge. In fact, the very essence of education, he says, is concentration of mind, without which proper attention and interest in learning cannot be secured. "The more the power of concentration," says Vivekananda, "the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the lowest shoe black, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better..... This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of Nature, and lets out floods of light." ²⁶ Referring to the importance of the power of concentration as the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge, he points out very pertinently : ²⁷

"In the present state of our body, we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things..... How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in Rajayoga. The practice of meditation leads to mental concentration.

"To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment,* and then with a perfect instrument, collect facts at will."

RIGHT APPROACH TO EDUCATION :

His approach to education is positive. He is particular that the public in the matter of education should be given only positive ideals. Negative thoughts, he says, weaken men. Pointing out the evils of a negative education, he observes : ²⁸

25. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 9—10.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

28. Swami Vivekananda's Works: Vol. V: pp. 247—248.

“We have only learnt that we are nobodies. Seldom are we given to understand that great men were ever born in our country. Nothing positive has been taught to us. We do not even know how to use our hands and feet ! We master all the facts and figures concerning the ancestors of the English, but we are sadly unmindful about our own. We have learnt only weakness. . . . So, how can it be but that the Shraddha is lost ? The idea of true Shraddha must be brought back more to us, the faith in our own selves must be reawakened, and then only, all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves”.

Whether it is a matter of educating the children or approach to religion, his approach is the same,—a positive approach and not a negative one. Condemning the negative approach of parents towards children in educating them he observes : ²⁹

“Do you not find that parents constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so forth the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases. If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. What holds good of children, also holds good of children in the region of higher thoughts. If you give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand, on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and the arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be gradually able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes wounds a man’s feelings.”

Even in the matter of religion, Vivekananda’s approach is positive. For he points out : “Never take the preaching of religion to mean the turning up of one’s nose at everything and at everybody. In matters physical, mental and spiri-

29. The Complete Works of the S'wami Vivekananda, Part VII, pp. 168—169.

tual—in everything we must give men positive ideas—and never hate anybody. It is your hatred of one another that has brought about your degradation. Now we shall have to raise men by scattering broadcast of only positive thoughts.”³⁰

WOMEN'S EDUCATION :

Swami Vivekananda, far from being satisfied with the societal status of women amongst us devoted himself to the cause of their uplift. He wanted that women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way, and hence, he was particular that no one ought to do this for them. He was confident that our Indian women were as capable of doing it as any in the world. To the question as to how far we should interfere in their affair, he observes that our right of interference is limited entirely to giving education.’ Being aware of the many and grave problems of our Indian women, he does not feel diffident about it, but on the other hand, he feels that there are none which are not to be solved by that magic word ‘Education’.

In the matter of women's education, he considered that there should be a religious element in it—he looked upon religion as the innermost core of education. In his view, we should bring to the need of India great fearless women—women worthy to continue the traditions of Sanghamitra, Ahalya Bai and Mira Bai—women who would be fit to be mothers of heroes. He emphasised qualities of purity, chastity and selflessness among women and wanted that they should be developed along their own lines of least resistance. The kind of education which he aimed at for women would help solve their own problems. “They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others,” says Vivekananda, “and so they are good only to weep their eyes at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to earn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi !”³¹

30. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

31 *Our Women*: Swami Vivekananda, pp. 41—42.

What Swamiji suggested might seem to be a new departure but they are the very qualities which are absolutely essential to be developed in our women, who for ages have been trained in helplessness and utter dependence on others. At present, in independent India, there are various educational programmes which aim at imparting training in self-defence and self-reliance, viz., N.C.C., A.C.C. Home Guards, Girl Guides Movement etc.

He holds aloft the ideal of chastity for women, which is more or less India's national heritage. He says, "Mere begetting children does not make a father ; a great many responsibilities have to be taken upon one's shoulders as well. To make a beginning in women's education : Our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. Now, first of all intensify that ideal within them above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married or single, if they prefer to remain so, they will not be in the least afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity."³² In his scheme of things, it would be imperative to train up some women in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of life-long virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity which is innate in their lifeblood, from hoary antiquity. His scheme is something similar to that of the religious training programme of the Jesuit order—Sisters and Nuns who remain virgins throughout. But how far Swami Vivekananda's idea can be successful in this regard at the present moment when the terms 'chastity' and 'morality' are bandied about, is rather doubtful. Swami Vivekananda, goes further and recommends that 'along with that they should be taught sciences and other things, which would be of benefit, not only to them but to others as well, and knowing this they would easily learn these things and feel pleasure in doing so'. All this is commendable no doubt.

Being a social reformer, besides a Vedantin, he was against parents disposing of a girl in marriage at an early

age—even if she be nine or ten years of age ! This was the social custom, which formed a part of the folkways and mores of his times, but this trend is getting gradually reversed now-a-days with education among women spreading wider than ever before. He was quite hopeful that women by their example and through their endeavours to hold the national ideal before the eyes of the people, a revolution in thoughts and aspirations would take place. How do matters stand now ?

To Swami Vivekananda, the uplift of India's women was of foremost importance. Therefore, he was earnest that girls' schools should be opened in every village and try to uplift them. It was his conviction that 'if the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country—then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country.' There are some sceptics, even to-day who do not favour education for women, on the grounds that with a smattering of education they would take merely to the Western modes of living. Swamiji's answer to the sceptics is quite challenging indeed. For he says : ³³

"In the beginning a few mistakes like that are unavoidable. When a new idea is preached, some failing to grasp it properly, go wrong in that way. But what matters it to the well-being of Society at large ? Well, those who are pioneers of the little bit of female education that now obtains in the country, were undoubtedly very great-hearted. But the truth is that some defect or other must creep into that learning or culture which is not founded on a religious basis. But now female education is to be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character, and observance of the vow of celibacy—these should be attended to. In the female education which has obtained up till now in India, it is religion that has been made a secondary concern ;

hence those defects you were speaking of have crept in. But no blame attaches therefore to the women."

But in the present, secular and social democracy in India, how far education could impart a religious bias is rather doubtful, unless the private educational institutions, which are constitutionally debarred from imparting such a religious bias, take it upon a voluntary basis—on the initiative of the parents and their children.

Swami Vivekananda boldly advocated at a time when everybody else was afraid, 'Educate your women first and leave them to themselves ; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters concerning them, who are you ?' Commenting on who will solve the problems of women—the widow problem and the woman question, he characteristically remarks :³⁴

"Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dare to say, 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child ' I am asked again and again, what I think of the widow problem and what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all—am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense ? Am I a woman, that you ask me that question again and again ? Who are you to solve women's problems ? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman ? Hands Off ! They will solve their own problems."

While Swami Vivekananda had nothing but admiration for the Western women, he would not very much like our women to have their intellectuality, however prized, it be at the cost of purity. "I admire you for all that you know," said Swami Vivekananda, "but I dislike the way you cover what is bad with roses and call it good. Intellectuality is not the highest good. Morality and spirituality are the things for which we strive. Our women are not so

34. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

learned, but they are more pure. To all women every man save her husband be as her son.”³⁵

His attitude towards women is that of highest regard and respect. He feels that educated women, even after marriage, and entering the world will inspire their husbands with noble ideals and be mothers of heroic sons. He does not agree with those who view that educated women will not command reputation in society—that nobody likes to marry them. It is his opinion that the learned and accomplished girls will never be in want of bridegrooms, since the society of the present day does not follow the ancient texts recommending child-marriage nor will it do so in the future. Even now don't we see it to be so? His approach to problems of women is characterised by catholicity of outlook, rather something rare to be found in a Vedantin. Referring to Western women, he points out: “Not until you learn to ignore the question of sex and to meet on a ground of common humanity will your women really develop”. “In the highest truth of the Parabrahman,” says Vivekananda, “there is no distinction of sex. We only notice this in the relative plane. And the more the mind becomes introspective, the more that idea of difference vanishes. Ultimately when the mind is wholly merged in the homogeneous and undifferentiated Brahman, then such ideas as this is a man or that a woman do not remain at all.”³⁶

Swami Vivekananda rather finds it difficult to understand why in this country ‘so much difference is made between men and women, whereas Vedanta declared that one and the same conscious-self is present in all beings.’ “Writing down Smritis, etc., and binding them by hard rules,” remarks Vivekananda, in a serious vein, “the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines”. If you do not raise the women who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise”³⁷

35. Swami Vivekananda's Works, Vol. V, 1947, p. 326.

36. Swami Vivekananda, *Our Women*, pp. 35—36.

37. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII, p. 212.

He is at a loss to understand in what Scriptures one finds statements that women are not competent for knowledge and devotion. By way of illustration, he points out that "you will find in the Vedic or Upanishadic age, Maitreyi, Gargi and other ladies of revered memory have taken the places of Rishis through their skill in discussing about Brahman. In an assembly of a thousand Brahmanas who were all erudite in the Vedas, Gargi boldly challenged Yagna Valka in a discussion about Brahman. When such ideal women were entitled to spiritual knowledge then why shall not the women have the same privilege now ?" ³⁸ Continuing the same discussion, he points out rather vividly : ³⁹

"What has happened once certainly happen again. History repeats itself. All nations have attained greatness, by paying proper respects to the women. That country and that nation which do not respect the woman have never become great, nor will ever be in future"

To Swami Vivekananda, the women are the living images or embodiment of *Sakti* and therefore, he accords them the highest respect. The future of the country, says Swamiji, depends upon the estimation in which the women of India are held. For this reason at least, he is particular that their social position and prestige shall be raised—an *ascent in the social ladder*, permitting both vertical and horizontal mobility. His travel abroad broadened his views on several matters, and particularly in respect of women, he found their position to be better there (in the West). Being pained, by contrast at their social status—low estimation of women in India, he was constrained to remark as follows : ⁴⁰

"To what straits the strictures of local usages have reduced the women of this country, rendering them lifeless and inert, you can only understand if you visited the Western countries. You alone are responsible for this miserable condition of the

38. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 212—213.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

women, and it rests with you also to raise them again."

In the scheme of studies which he advocates for women, he infuses a sense of purpose and realism. His scheme is comprehensive enough, admitting wider scope. In a sense, his programme of studies is quite near the modern Home Science courses for women in Colleges plus religious training of course : study of religious literature, Sanskrit Grammar, English, Sewing, Culinary art, rules of domestic work, up-bringing of children, Japa, worship and meditation — all these shall form an indispensable part of the teaching. His aim was to train a few Brahmacharinis as devout teachers of character for spread of female education in the country at large. The primary emphasis would, of course, be on spirituality, sacrifice, self-control and service— being the vow of their life.

ON HIGHER EDUCATION :

What are his views regarding higher education ? He does not agree that all is well with higher education. Being himself a product of higher education — of the University of Calcutta, he is sensitive enough to the shortcomings of the system of education at the University level. Referring to the palpable defects of the then existing University system, he observed : ⁴¹

"It is almost wholly one of defects. Why, it is nothing but a perfect machine for turning out clerks, I would even thank my stars if that were all. But no ! See how men are becoming destitute of Shraddha and faith. They assert that the Gita was only an interpolation, and that the Vedas were but rustic songs ! They like to master every detail concerning things and nations outside of India, but if you ask them they do not know even the names of their own forefathers upto the seventh generation, not to speak of the fourteenth!"

41. Swami Vivekananda's Works, Vol. V, pp. 280—281.

Swami Vivekananda only distrusts those big university scholars, who hold that there is no such thing as a national history for our country. It is his firm conviction that 'a nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world'. He feels that if a person has faith in his nation's history, 'such faith would curb his actions and feelings, so much so that he would rather die than commit a wrong.' He strongly believes that Western education, especially higher education has given the lie, to the truth behind our luminous history of the nation and therefore, what is required is that history has to be rewritten—it should be restated and suited to the proper understanding and ways of thinking of the modern and thoroughly Western educated Indian. How can that be done? To this question, Swami Vivekananda's answer is as follows : ⁴²

"....., to bring that about, the old institution of "living with the Guru" and similar systems of imparting education are needed. What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddha in one's own self. Another thing that we want is the abolition of that system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner, as that of the man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse."

Commenting on the unpsychological methods of teaching in Universities, he remarks very pertinently : ⁴³

"Our pedagogues are making parrots of our boys, and ruining their brains by cramming a lot of subjects into them. What a fuss and fury about graduating, and after a few days all cooled down ! And after all that, what is it they learn but that what religion and customs we have are all bad and what the Westerners have are all good ! At last, they cannot keep the wolf from the door ! What does it matter if this higher education remains

42. *Ibid* , p. 282.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 282—283.

or goes ! It would be better if the people got a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread, instead of dawdling about and crying for service."

What does Swami Vivekananda mean exactly by higher education ? He avers :⁴⁴

"Does higher education mean mere study of material sciences and turning out things of every day use by machinery ? The use of higher education is to find out how to solve the problems of life, and this is what is engaging the profound thought of the modern civilised world....."

He recommends a very practical system of studies or education, which will mean, a study of different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language, and Western science. He emphasises the need for technical education and all else which may develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves, and save something against a rainy day. For all practical purposes, such a system of studies smacks of the modern trend,—emphasis on a practical bias in education.

VIEWES ON MISCELLANEOUS ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

ON TEACHING :

He believes more in the value of being self-taught. "No one was ever really taught by another", observed Swami Vivekananda once. Continuing, he says, "Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clear to us by our own power of perception and thought, and we shall realise them in our own souls."⁴⁵ His faith in the infinite power of the soul of each and every person

44. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

45. Swami Vivekananda, *EDUCATION*, p. 2.

is so profound, that he is led to believe that its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it. Therefore, he looks at the teacher as a philosopher, friend and guide,—helping the educand to go forward in its own way. In this connection, a few of his observations may be worth quoting : ⁴⁶

“ You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature. The child also develops itself. What you can do is not of a positive nature but negative. You can take away the obstacles, and knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything.”

Describing the functions of a teacher, Swami Vivekananda points out : ⁴⁷

“ You can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air that it wants. And there your work stops. It will take all that it wants by its own nature. So with the education of the child A child educates itself. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher. We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears, eyes, etc., and finally everything will become easy.”

His accent is on self-development and in this regard, his principle is the psychological one of proceeding from the concrete to the abstract. For instance, he observes : ⁴⁸

“ The mind works through various stages to attain its fuller development. First, it lays hold of

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 3—4.

47. Swami Vivekananda's Works, Vol. V, p. 282.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

the concrete, and only gradually deals with abstractions.”

His Principle of teaching is as follows :—⁴⁹

“The teaching must therefore be modified according to the needs of the taught Fire a mass of bird-shot, one at least will strike; give a man a whole museum of truths, he will at once take what is suited to him. Past lives have moulded our tendencies, given to the taught in accordance with his tendency. Intellectual, mystical, devotional, practical—make one the basis, but teach the others with it. Intellect must be balanced with love, the mystical nature with reason, while practice must form part of every method. Take every one where he stands and push him forward. Religious teaching must always be constructive, not destructive.

He is particular about establishing a heart-contact between the educator and the educand—some kind of a *rapprochement* being established. “The true teacher”, observes Vivekananda, “is one who can throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never teach well. Give up the notion that man is a responsible being, only the perfect man is responsible. The ignorant have drunk deep of the cup of delusion and are not sane. You, who know, must have infinite patience with these. Have nothing but love for them and find out the disease that has made them see the world in a wrong light, then help them to cure it and see aright.”⁵⁰

He believes more in the inner teacher than the external guide. For he says :⁵¹

“Go into your own and get the Upanishads out of your own self. You are the greatest book that ever was or ever will be, the infinite depository of all that is. Until the inner teacher opens, all

94. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII, p. 96.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

outside teaching is in vain. It must lead to the opening of the book of the heart to have any value".

It is his firm conviction that we have to see for ourselves; teachers can only "bring the food," we must eat it ourselves to be nourished. That is why he dislikes pedagogues, cramming their pupils' minds with useless information and intellectual rubbish. The real *Guru* is, he says, the one through whom we have our spiritual influence an effective channel through which the spiritual current flows to us, the link which joins us to the whole spiritual world. "Any one can teach," says Swamiji, "but the spirit must be passed on by the *Guru* to the *Sishya* (disciple) and that will fructify." Does Swami Vivekananda advocate personality cult in the matter of teachers? No. "Too much faith in personality" says he, "has a tendency to produce weakness and idolatry, but intense love for the *Guru* makes rapid growth possible, he connects us with the internal *Guru*. Adore your *Guru*. If there be real truth in him; that *guru-bhakti* (devotion to the teacher) will quickly lead you to the highest."⁵² Can this kind of a *Guru Bhakti* be expected of the pupils, these days?

EDUCATION OF CHARACTER :

To Swami Vivekananda, education without character was almost useless. Being fully convinced that the religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries, he tirelessly emphasised the need for character training in both men and women in their youth. Character building and strengthening the will formed an integral part of his emphasis in all his speeches. For he says, "Build up your character and manifest your real nature, the Effulgent, the Resplendent, the Ever-Pure and call it up in every one you see." He sums up the qualities of character of any man as nothing but the "aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind." In other words, he defines character as repeated habits and according to him repeated habits alone can reform character.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 82—83.

How is character formed ? According to Vivekananda, the sum-total of the manifold impressions left on the mind of the individual as a result of every work done, every movement of the body, every thought of the individual — impressions left on the mind-stuff, whether working on the surface or subconsciously, determine the character of an individual. The colouring of the character takes a particular pattern, depending upon whether the impressions are good or bad. For instance, if good impressions prevail, the character formed may be good, if bad, it becomes bad. Therefore, associations have great values in determining the strength of character — association of one's ideas and thoughts, good or bad as the case may be.

How is one to judge the character of a person ? Says Vivekananda :⁵³

“ If you really want to judge the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Watch a man do his most common actions. Those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of the great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human-beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is really great whose character is great always — the same whatever he be.”

The highest ideal of character, to Swami Vivekananda, is of course, ‘ renunciation’ and the harmonious development of character can be best effected, says he, by association with persons whose character has been so developed. Having been conscious of the sufferings of the masses and their misery, he was tempted to appeal with emotions to the public, in the following forceful manner.⁵⁴

“ The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

53. Swami Vivekananda, EDUCATION, p. 17.

54. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII, p. 432.

“Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones ! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the God within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work ?”

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION :

He held religion to be the innermost core of education. Even while elevating the masses, he would not in the least injure their religion. It was his desire that the true eternal principles have to be held before the people by presenting the eternal truths of the great-souled ones of the great Saints. He was for spreading far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna, roaring out the Gita with the voice of a lion, and bringing into daily use the worship of Shakti—the Divine Mother, the source of all power. He always stressed the idea of the hero with the tremendous spirit of *Rajas* thrilling through his veins from head to foot—the hero who will dare and die to know the truth and whose armour will be renunciation and his sword wisdom—stress on the spirit of the brave warrior in the battle-field.

His concept of religion is not characterised by exclusiveness of spirit. It is broad-based. In religion, his emphasis is on the universal spirit of love, that eternal love, unruffled equanimity under all circumstances and perfect freedom from jealousy or animosity. His religion is a new religion of the age, characterised by a kind of synthesis of Yoga, knowledge, Devotion and work—all being combined in an integral form so as to help create a new society. “All of religion”, says Swami Vivekananda “is contained in the Vedanta, that is in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Advaita ; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of religion.”

His new religion draws its strength from all sources — a salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present and to all that are to come in the future.

It is a Catholic and Universal religion, and all-embracing, in the sense, its watchword is acceptance—toleration or keeping one's heart open for all. It was his conviction that mere intellectual education was useless since it does not cultivate the heart. For he says :⁵⁵

“We may be the most intellectual people the world ever saw and yet we may not come to God at all. On the other hand, irreligious men have been produced from the most intellectual training. It is one of the evils of Western civilization—intellectual education alone without taking care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. It goes beyond the intellect and reaches what is called inspiration. Always cultivate the heart. Through the heart, the Lord speaks.”

By a proper kind of religious education, he means an education in values oriented towards training in truth, in strength, in being fearless, and training in self-confidence — faith in one's own self. True religion, to Swami Vivekananda meant infinite strength. “Strength is goodness,” says he, but “weakness is sin.” He does not want any one to be afraid to tell the truth boldly. According to him, the test of truth is this : “anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison. There is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all knowledge. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.”

What would he like us to do ? His answer is : “Go back to your Upanishads, the shining, strengthening the bright philosophy. Take up this philosophy. The great truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as our existence. The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them and the salvation of India will be at hand.”⁵⁶ While emphasising a proper kind of

55. Swami Vivekananda, EDUCATION, pp. 46—47.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 43

religious education, his accent is on overcoming essentially physical weakness, which he considers to be the root of our country's miseries. Rightly does he say : ⁵⁷

“ Speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause? Physical weakness. This sort of brain is not able to do anything. We must strengthen it. First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through your foot-ball than through the study of the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourselves as men.”

What Swami Vivekananda advocates is indomitable courage and strength and draws his inspiration in this regard from the Upanishads and the Vedas — they are the great mines of strength to him. “Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world” says he. Continuing he observes : “The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, Physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads.” Through a right kind of religious education, he says, ‘that a person’s character can be built. Inspired by the Vedas and their energising influence, he speaks out with vigour :⁵⁸

“ Through the thunder roll of the dignified Vedic hymns life is to be brought back into the country. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood should be revived. If you can build your character after such an ideal then a thousand others

57. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

will follow. But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage. Never allow weakness to overtake your mind."

True religion, he says, goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right. He knew that it would be difficult to get the essential, the metaphysical part of the religion into the minds of the people since it is remote from their thoughts and manner of life. Being a *sanyasin* of the highest order, he declared that he had nothing whatever to do with mere ritual or dogma as such; he considered it his life's mission to show to the world that religion is everything and in everything. The crowning significance of his new religion lies in the fact that life is itself a religion. If the many and one be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation. He does not make much distinction between a sacred and a secular religion. To him, to labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life truly lived is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as it is to quit and to avoid. His religion is not one of escapism from life and its realities. To him, the workshop, the farmyard and the field may be as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man, as the cell of a monk, or the door of the temple. To him, there is not much difference between real service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality. Rightly does he hold 'Art, Science and Religion' — the trinity as one but three different ways of expressing a single truth. To him, temples and churches, books and forms are simply the Kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps. According to him, no Scriptures can make us religious nor religion is to be found in mere doctrines or dogmas — it is being and becoming. It is realisation. The crucial fact behind his idea of religious education is to direct attention

to the individual, to make him strong, to teach him that he himself is divine. His clarion call upon all men was to make them conscious of this divinity within them — the ideal of every religion. His religious philosophy or ideal may be expressed in his own words as follows :⁵⁹

“ My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is : to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.”

The emphasis in his scheme of religious education is on self-reliance. It is his considered opinion that ‘all the wealth of the world cannot help one little village if the people are not taught to help themselves.’ So long as the masses are not roused to help themselves and be self-reliant, all our efforts, he says, will be ineffectual. In enthusing the masses, his effective method of teaching is of course *Katha* (Puranic recitals), through which he says, they may be taught all that we want. Thus, he holds *katha* or puranic recitals as one of the very effective instruments or media of teaching the people — a mass communication media which is gradually getting into disuse now-a-days. Can this once popular art of teaching the masses be restored?

“ The highest aim of all disciplines, all spiritual paths”, says Vivekananda, “ is the attainment of the knowledge of Atman.” Though self-realisation is the ultimate goal of religion, he does not lose sight of the practical aspects of religion. By a practical religion what does he mean ? He says :⁶⁰

“ It will not do merely to listen to great principles. You must apply them in the practical field, turn them into constant practice. What will be the good of cramming the high sounding dicta of the scriptures? You have first to grasp the teachings of the Shastras, and then to work them out in practical life. Do you understand ? This is called practical religion.”

59. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII, p. 431.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

HIS IDEAL :

His ideal was the austere spirit of heroic manhood. His life's mission was to advocate that people should be possessed of *Shraddha* (faith), of *Virya* (courage) and attain to the knowledge of the Atman, and sacrifice their lives for the good of others. This was his wish and blessing. He further adds :⁶¹

“If you fail to do anything else, you can tell the world at large about the scriptural truths you have studied so long. There is no higher gift than this; for the gift of knowledge is the highest in the world.”

His concern to serve the poor was so great that his heart went out to them in sympathy. Opening the flood-gates of his heart, he pours out in an emotional vein :⁶²

“ Seeing the poor people of our country starving for food, a desire comes to me to overthrow all ceremonial worship and learning, and go round from village to village, collecting money from the rich by convincing them through force of character and Sadhana, and to spend the whole life in serving the poor.”

The passage quoted above only echoes the true spirit of a Mahatma behind the Swami.

He was against the trend of denationalisation which was gaining momentum even in his days in the matter of costume, ways of eating and living, etc. He used to contend : “ By giving up one's national costume and ways of eating and living, one gets denationalised. One can learn from all, but that learning which leads to denationalisation does not help one's uplift but becomes the cause of degradation.” Not that he was against putting on official dress in official quarters, but on returning home, he would argue, one should wear a regular home dress. His remarks on the way in which people dress themselves seems to be

61. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

quite characteristic of the present situation also in the country. How pertinent indeed it is, when he observes.⁶³

“What nonsense have you learnt to imitate in the matter of dress! Boys and young men now-a-days adopt a peculiar mode of dress which is neither Indian nor Western, but a queer combination.

If only Swami Vivekananda had lived now, what would have been his remarks on the way in which the younger generations wear their costume and shine in their queer sleeves !

He advocated the essence of the Gita philosophy : “Raise self by self.” He was for each one working out his own salvation. The constant refrain of his speech was emphasis on freedom in all matters — advance towards *Mukti*, according to him was the worthiest gain of man. “To advance oneself towards freedom — physical, mental and spiritual, and help others to do so,” says Vivekananda, “is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are injurious, and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom.” He expresses his desire for freedom in the following vivid terms:⁶⁴

“Oh to live even for a day in the full light of freedom, to breathe the free air of simplicity ! Is not that the highest purity ?

“In this world we work through fear of others, we talk through fear, we think through fear, alas! we are born in a land of enemies. Who is there who has been able to get rid of this feeling of fear as if every one is a spy set specially to watch him? And woe unto the man who pushes himself forward ! Will it ever be a land of friends ? Who knows ? We can only try.”

The wide-spread laziness, meanness and hypocrisy that covered the whole length and breadth of the country,

63. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

64. Swami Vivekananda's Works: Vol. V, p. 110.

moved him so much to the quick that he was tempted to express a 'Fie on modern education': Can an intelligent man look on all this and remain quiet? Does it not bring tears to the eyes? whichever way I look, I see no sign of life. You are thinking yourselves highly educated. What nonsense have you learnt? Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking some University degrees, you consider yourselves educated! Is this education?⁶⁵

His ideal, whatever it be, is to seek the Highest. For he says: 'Seek the Highest, always the Highest. for in the highest is eternal bliss. If I am to hunt, I will hunt the lion. If I am to rob, I will rob the treasury of the King. Seek the Highest'.

Pointing out the bigotry and narrowness of the people he observes: "As long as *Touch-me-not-ism* is your creed, and the Kitchen-pot your deity, you cannot rise spiritually. All the petty differences between religion and religion are mere word-struggles, nonsense. Every one thinks, "This is my original idea" and wants to have things his own way. That is how struggles come'. He does not encourage the propagation of a religion through fanaticism and bigotry. According to him, the preaching of that religion is firm-based on solid ground, which gives every one liberty to his opinions and thus uplifts him to a higher path, though this process is slow.

He was particular that in order a nation may rise, it must have a high ideal and that ideal, of course, according to him, must be the abstract Brahman. Since all cannot be inspired by an abstract ideal, he would encourage every one to have personal ideal. Speaking about spiritual ideas and spreading them broadcast, he pertinently observes:⁶⁷

65. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII, p. 439.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

* Swami Vivekananda's Work's Vol. V, p. 194.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

“First deluge the land (India) with spiritual ideas then other ideas will follow. The gift of spirituality and spiritual knowledge is the highest for it saves from many and many a birth; the next gift is secular knowledge, as it opens the eyes of human beings towards that spiritual knowledge; the next is the saving of life and the fourth is the gift of food.”

What are his ideas on language? His motto was always ‘simplicity’. He emphasised the use of the simplest language possible. Simplicity, he says, is the secret. Speaking about the ideal of language, he remarks: ‘My ideal of language in my Master’s language, most colloquial and yet most expressive. It must express the thought which is intended to be conveyed’ His ambition was that the wonderful stories scattered all over the Sanskrit literature should be re-written and made popular. He emphasised that in this attempt, the main feature should be the teaching of *principles* through stories. He was particular that it should not be made metaphysical at all.

How does Swami Vivekananda view art? He was by nature very artistic and the artistic faculty was highly developed in him. In this, he was influenced by his Master Sri Ramakrishna—that without the artistic faculty highly developed, none can be truly spiritual. His view of Art is, that it must be in close touch with Nature. According to him, ‘true Art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, and yet it is quite above it. So Art must be in touch with Nature—and wherever that touch is gone, Art degenerates—yet it must be above Nature.’ His view is that ‘Art is—representing the beautiful. There must be art in everything. The value of matter, holds Swami Vivekananda, depends solely on its capacities of expressing *ideas*.

In a different context, expressing his candid views on art, he observes: ⁶⁸

68. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part VII, p. 395.

